This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at http://books.google.com/

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Spiritual Exercises of Mary.

[Copyright reserved.]

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

"Accipio te in mea omnia
Præbe mihi Cor Tuum, O Maria."

OUR LADY'S LIBRARY.

Convent of the Maternal Heart of Mary.

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

OF

MARY.

REVISED AND APPROVED BY HIS LORDSHIP

The Bishop of Nottingham.

"I am the Mother of fair Love."

London:
THOMAS RICHARDSON & SONS,
26, PATERNOSTER ROW; AND DERBY.
[*And may be had at the Convent of the Maternal Heart of Mary, Hyson Green, Nottingham.*]

Digitized by Google
1466 a 1

BODLEIAN LIBRARY
3 APR 14
OXFORD

Digitized by Google

IMPRIMATUR:

✠ EDUARDUS,

EPISCOPUS NOTTINGHAMIENSIS.

Die Aug. 4, 1878.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

PAGE

Preface ix
Preliminary Explanation xxiii
Introduction 1

RETREAT PREPARATORY TO RENEWING BAPTISMAL VOWS, AND MAKING ENTIRE CONSECRATION TO MARY.

First Meditation 11
Second Meditation 13
Third Meditation 14
Fourth Meditation.—On constant watchfulness over ourselves 16
Fifth Meditation.—On the same ... 17
Sixth Meditation.—On the employment of natural means for obtaining any special object 20
Seventh Meditation.—On extremes ... 23
Eighth Meditation 25
Ninth Meditation.—On consulting the Holy Spirit 29
Tenth Meditation.—On fulfilling the Will of God 31
Eleventh Meditation.—On human respect 33
Twelfth Meditation.—On charitableness ... 36
Conclusion of the Twelve Days' Preparation for divesting one's self of the spirit of the world 40

Digitized by Google

FIRST WEEK'S PREPARATION MUST CONSIST IN OUR EARNEST ENDEAVOUR TO KNOW OURSELVES.—First Meditation ... 44
Second Meditation 46
Third Meditation 47
Fourth Meditation 49
Fifth Meditation 51
Sixth Meditation 53
Seventh Meditation 55

ONE WEEK TO BE DEVOTED TO MEDITATING, AND HUMBLY IMPLORING GOD TO GRANT US THE GRACE TO KNOW MARY BETTER 60
First Meditation 65
Second Meditation 68
Third Meditation.—On the Simplicity of Mary 72
Extract from the "Divine Sequence" ... 77
Third Meditation.—The Peace of Mary ... 80
Fourth Meditation.—The Heart of Mary 83
Fifth Meditation 88
Sixth Meditation.—The Maternity of Mary 92
Seventh Meditation.—Mary our Queen ... 95

THIRD WEEK, TO BE DEVOTED TO ENDEAVOURING TO KNOW OUR DEAR LORD BETTER.—Preparatory Consideration ... 101
First Meditation 105
Second Meditation 108
Third Meditation 112
Fourth Meditation.—The Love of the Sacred Heart for Mary 114
Fifth Meditation.—The Love of Jesus for Saints 119
Sixth Meditation.—The Love of the Good Shepherd 124

Digitized by Google

Seventh Meditation.—Jesus and Mary on Calvary 132
Eighth Meditation.—"I know Mine, and Mine know Me" 137

Part II.

Act of Consecration for those who enter on the Path of Mary 141
Daily Prayer and Renewal of Consecration, to be said every morning by Mary's own 143
Instruction on daily duties 150
Compacts and Intentions to be remembered 159
Recommendations 162

Part III.

True Liberty, the essential spirit that those who walk in the Path of Mary should aim at, and will attain to if they are faithful 164
On Devotion to Mary, for the grace of a happy death 186

Four Conferences upon the Four Worlds, the one we are now in, and the three we may be in: Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell.

First Conference.—The world we live in 193
Second Conference.—The world we hope to be in 210
Third Conference.—Purgatory ... 218
Fourth Conference.—We may be in hell ... 226
Fifth Conference.—On temptation ... 229
Meditation on the Blessed Trinity ... 239

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

There are needed a few remarks as preface to the following "Spiritual Exercises."

I. What is their object? What are they intended to do for the soul? What is the spirit in which they should be entered upon? The object of the "Spiritual Exercises" is to entirely reform, renew, regenerate the soul: that is, apply to the soul the Precious Blood, as Jesus desires it should be applied. Now, all who have entered on the narrow way of perfection, all who are desirous of living true holy Christian lives, have need of many helps, many assistances: they have much to overcome; they have many hindrances in the way of perfection; they have many stumbling blocks, old habits, predominant passions, selfish inclinations, so very much opposed to the reign of Jesus Christ. Ah! some when they look upon themselves, when they consider what they must appear

Digitized by Google

in the sight of an All-Holy God, grow discouraged, become disheartened, they do not like themselves; they would wish to be pleasing to God, but when they come first to know themselves in some truthful light, they feel they must be displeasing to God, Who is so pure, so holy. Now this is not right; God does love, we know, even sinners, but sinners are farther from Him. Those who are aspiring to a life of union with God have reason to dread even the least stain upon their souls, because they, as it were, bring sin closer to God, and "God Who is infinitely pure, hates infinitely the least stain." Therefore we must be anxious to cleanse our souls from aught that could displease Him; but likewise not to be disheartened when we first see ourselves in our true light, as something so vile, so unworthy of the love of the great good God. No, we must only resolve to do all that lies in our power to render our souls more pleasing in the sight of God. Now we have every means we could possibly want to help us. Untold treasures lie all around us in God's holy Church. But we might live long in a place where all around us there were

Digitized by Google

remedies and applications for bodily ills we might be suffering from, but if we did not apply or take the remedies they would not benefit us; or if we did take them, but took them in the wrong way, they would be no good, and might even do us harm. Thus, as Rodriguez gives us example of, put a piece of dry wood into the fire, it is quickly in a blaze; but put a piece of damp wood into the same fire and it will but smoulder and smoke. Thus we know the Sacraments are the great means of grace, they are a fire to which the soul should have recourse, in order to enkindle within it the fire of Divine Love. But the soul needs to be prepared properly to receive this fire; if it is clogged with the damp of self-love it cannot receive what it would if prepared for the reception of this Divine Fire.

These "Spiritual Exercises," then, are intended to remove from the soul all impediment to grace; they are intended to purify it, to renew within it its baptismal innocence, and render it an object of love and delight to God, His holy angels and saints, and therefore to render that soul happy in His Holy Presence. Ah, if we did but

Digitized by Google

know how very dear, how inexpressibly dear we are to God, we would endeavour to make ourselves more pleasing to Him; we would endeavour to cast away from us aught that would displease Him. If we but thought how carefully we ourselves avoid whatever is repugnant or displeasing to us, how particular that nothing offends our senses, or that nothing should come near us that our nature revolts from, we might gain some little idea of a small sin, or even imperfection in the sight of God, though there really is nothing so repugnant to us as sin is repugnant to God. And we can carry about with us indifferently, if not with deliberate pleasure, this that is so hateful in the sight of God. Ah, the one proper disposition for us is an abiding contrition, the one end and aim of our lives to lessen the dominion of Satan, of sin all over the world; to begin first with ourselves, to purify our own souls, and thus be able to work in the souls of others. Let our souls be really temples of God. Let us endeavour to render them day by day more pleasing to God. We can work wonders in them if we will. We will then strive all we can. We will endeavour to

Digitized by Google

use all the means we know of to bring the kingdom of God within us. "Thy kingdom come," is our daily prayer. Let it be made, during this retreat, our hourly one. Let it be the thought upon waking, our thought upon going to rest: "Thy kingdom come." Yes, before we go to His kingdom may it come to us. May we build this holy temple within us. May it be our joyous thought during this retreat: I am building a house where Jesus will dwell, where He will have His throne, where He may reign, where indeed is His kingdom where He delights to dwell. Yes, His delights are to be with the children of men. His joy He makes theirs, their joy His. Good, good Jesus, dear loving Lord, we all will love Thee, we all will work to please Thee. We all will strive to live pure holy lives, lives of love to God and man. We will, in this time of retreat with Thee, so work that nought of the empire of Satan shall remain in us. We will, if we feel his approach by uncharitableness, by self-will, self-love, by impatience, or by any of the hundred ways he comes to molest us, defend ourselves by the names of Jesus and Mary, call the holy angels to assist us,

Digitized by Google

treat with scorn any suggestion made to draw us away from the good to be derived from this time of special grace, this retreat which we should desire to make with all the zeal and fervour that we can, to make it with the intention of making ourselves as pleasing as we possibly can to the God Who so loves us, Who is so good to us, Who, may we speak the word, is so proud of us. Ah, do let us resolve to do all we can for Him. Do not let our selfishness hinder us becoming what we can so easily become, one of His most cherished children, one whom it gives Him pleasure to look upon, one to whom He can give as He so loves to give, one who is indeed the spoilt child of His love, one who because they have subdued self, and become humble, God can give as He loves to give. He cannot give to many as He wishes, they would turn His gifts to poison. It would make them vain and self-complacent. They would think there was something in themselves to make God thus lavish upon them His gifts; but the soul that is divested of self, that is humble, that truly sees itself so devoid of all good, this soul, this saintly soul, is the one chosen by God

Digitized by Google

to be His special friend in time and eternity. Yes, the soul that has become humble, simple as a little child, is the child after God's own heart. It attributes nothing to itself; it truthfully knows itself, and Truth Itself loves it for its truthfulness, and heaps favour upon favour on it, which that soul ever faithfully attributes to the Source from whence they come.

We may seem to repeat the same thing again and again, but it is the one thing which, if constantly remembered, will help us perhaps more than any other. The thought how God loves us. Let us daily realize this. Let us in the morning, think, repeat it over, meditate upon it until it sinks into our hearts and comforts us: "The good good God loves me." Let our last thought at night be the thought that the great God loves us, that He is everywhere, that He, therefore, Love Itself is present to us, all around us; we rest in Him, sleep and repose in the arms of Divine Love. An infinite, untiring, unending love, is the Love of the Great Creator, loving us unto death, beyond death: for Jesus died and rose again for us; Jesus tells us He loves us as

Digitized by Google

His Father hath loved Him. Let us then return this love as far as we can. Let us do all we can to make ourselves children of God well-pleasing to Him. We can change ourselves if we will. "If thou *wilt* be perfect," speaks Our Lord to the soul He longed to fill with His own Spirit. We can be, therefore, but we must sell what we love best. We shall receive heaven in exchange for the little of earth we give up. If we give up ourselves we receive God's Self; when we give up our own will and way, our own spirit, to walk according to God's will and in His way, we receive His Spirit. Precious happy exchange, every part of ourselves emptied, subdued, is filled with God.

As mentioned in the First Meditation of the Exercises: "Nature abhors a vacuum." There can be no such thing. When one thing is emptied it is replaced by another. When water is emptied from a vessel air refills it. Ventilate a room, the bad air is replaced by good. This, then, is the first step of the Spiritual Exercises, the renunciation of the world and one's self, the emptying from the soul worldliness and self. This is the foundation of all perfec-

Digitized by Google

tion; without this renunciation of self there can be no solid advance. It is the reason so many loiter or go back, and do not become what God wishes they should; they want to become perfect, but are not willing to sell what they have, themselves, their will; they walk sorrowfully, they walk not with Jesus, because they love their possessions, themselves, too well. They strive to attain virtue, but they are like people attempting to build without a foundation. We must once for all renounce ourselves; we must deny ourselves, "for our natural inclinations are prone to evil from our very childhood, and if not curbed and corrected by self-denial, will infallibly carry us to hell." So says our Catechism. Simply to save our souls we must deny ourselves; and we will, by God's grace we will, and be thus restored in great measure to the state of liberty and happiness enjoyed by our first parents, and intended by God to be enjoyed likewise by their children. Yes, after the first struggle with self, after the rooting up of old habits, the casting away of the bad nature given us by Adam and Eve, we are given a new nature by Jesus and Mary,

Digitized by Google

and this new nature restores us to the liberty of the children of God; then indeed our own nature, subdued by its superior new nature, reformed in the newness of its mind, having put on the new man, none other than our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, is more than restored to its original greatness. We are a spectacle of delight to angels and men, who are none other than the saints of heaven. We walk then in peace, in a wondrous peace even on earth, a peace none know but those who taste it, and a peace which well repays the previous struggles we have had to attain it. We have not those fierce struggles and temptations then. Our wills are so united to Jesus, we are so one with Him, that we cannot contradict Him; we can but think as He thinks. It is so real a union we have with Jesus, He is so entirely master of our hearts that we are truly one with Him; He is with us, participating in our joys; He is with us, helping us in our sorrows, for in this life we must suffer, but we suffer in peace, we suffer joyfully. "Your joy no man shall take from you." "My peace I give unto you, My peace I leave with you; not as

Digitized by Google

the world giveth do I give, but a peace the world cannot give." The apostles never could have done such wonderful things if they had not been supported by this joy and peace of Jesus. Why are we so weak and cowardly? Why do we shrink away from the service of Jesus? We think His yoke is hard, but He tells us Himself if we take it upon ourselves we shall find it sweet and light. Yes, dear Lord, it is sweet, it is light, but to those who have overcome. They truly can say, who walk with Thee, that their hearts burn with love, they overflow with joy, their heaven is commenced even on earth. It is indeed so with the faithful servants of Jesus: as with the servants of Satan, their hell commences often on earth, "they are living portions of hell walking on God's good earth;" so the loving followers of Jesus are living portions of heaven; they see and abound, their hearts rejoice, they are inebriated with God's joy. They truly rejoice in the Lord, and He gives them their heart's desire. Blessed be Jesus, Who in His sweet compassion, tenderness, and love, has made us, that we may be happy with Him both here and hereafter.

Digitized by Google

His Sacred Heart desires our happiness; He has made us that we might be so. He has given us every means of being so. We fulfil His will when we are so, and can say with the Apostle, "I exceedingly abound with joy in all tribulations." We please Jesus by our happiness then. He delights not in seeing us miserable. He desires not we should be even dull, but He desires we should begin to do on earth what we shall do for ever in heaven. "Rejoice in the Lord *always*, again and again." "Come, let us rejoice, for the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all. In His hands are all the ends of the earth. He has graven us in His hands; our walls are ever before His eyes."

We are as children playing before a loving father. Let us then strive not to mar ourselves in His sight; let us strive to be as pleasing to Him as we can. Let us be simple loving children of an infinitely loving Father. Let us be loving, as we are beloved, children of the fair Immaculate Mother. Let us ever always look up to her as our Mother. Let us so entirely give ourselves to her that she may use her

Digitized by Google

mother's influence over us. Let her feel we trust her. Let us strive to ever and always love her with a Jesu's love. Let it be the one great thought of our lives; thus shall we best imitate our dear Lord, whose constant thought, from the beginning to the end of His life, was of His cherished one, His most beautiful above all women, the Mother above all mothers, His and our own Mother Mary. Mother, bless your children as they take this first step in your sweet way. Bless them, dear Mother, who look to you, who draw near to you. Mother, the world is dark and dreary, storms have arisen up against us, we call upon you, we hold our hands out to you, take them, and lead us yourself along your own Path to Heaven. Thou art the way Jesus came to us, the way we must go to Him. We would imitate Him, we would follow Him in all things. We would begin our new life in union with Him, and therefore, dear Mother, in union with thee. Bless all who take these steps to thy Path, the Spiritual Exercises written to conduct the soul to that happy state which is, by its voluntary subjection, the means by which the soul attains to the

Digitized by Google

liberty of the children of God, and by its union and imitation of the Incarnate One on earth, hereafter transformed into His likeness, and will rest for ever with the Eternal Word, in the Bosom of His Heavenly Father, Whom He has told us to call our Father. Father, Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Digitized by Google

Preliminary Explanation.

The plan advised by the Ven. de Montfort as good, and in some cases even necessary, if we would render our consecration to Mary pleasing to her, and ensure her acceptance of it, is simply that twelve days be set apart to endeavour to rid ourselves of the spirit of the world; followed by one week devoted to self-knowledge, contrition, etc.; this to be followed by one week devoted to endeavouring to know Mary; and lastly, one week in which to endeavour to know our dear Lord better. The following meditations are simply sketches of the matters it would be good to consider. Many people, otherwise good and pious, may not be themselves aware how much worldliness there really is in them; many constantly engaged in busy occupations, who rarely enter thoroughly into themselves (as do Religious, for instance, in their annual retreats) may have

Digitized by Google

lost sight of themselves, or rather, perhaps have never known themselves at all. The meditations given may assist them in this salutary knowledge, viz., knowledge of one's self; and then they will better be able to know Mary; they will better be able to meditate upon that wonderful Immaculate Conception of God, the Virgin Mother; they will better be able, in humble contemplation, to dwell upon that masterpiece of the Holy Ghost, the Sacred Humanity of Jesus; they will be able better to fathom (though it will be ever a fathomless abyss) the depths of mercy, love, the infinite perfections of the Sacred Heart.

Ah, wrong are those who attempt to know God, and not only do not endeavour to know themselves, but seem to endeavour *not* to know themselves; who palliate and strive to gloss over what either their conscience or some kind friend may endeavour to show them of themselves. Ah, wrong are they who do not strive to be united with God, to draw near to Him by the way of the cross, by mortification, by preparing His way by penance, the mortification of the will, the penance of

Digitized by Google

patient endurance of contradiction; that is the only way for true knowledge of God, for true union. Do we wish to be united with Jesus by a true union, we must deny ourselves; we must take up our cross and follow Him. If He gives us a glance or a taste of Thabor, we must not desire to remain there, or we shall shamefully desert Him on Calvary. We must not expect to be united with Him, save on Calvary. We cannot unite Him to worldliness and sin. He would not stay with us. But let us rid ourselves of sin; let us, though in the world, keep ourselves unspotted from it, and then He will come and take up His abode with us, bringing His peace and joy with Him. Ah, it would be well worth a many years struggle to attain to that (perhaps to us at present far off) haven, even on earth, that time when the soul, living more in Jesus than in itself, possesses that peace the world cannot give, that the world cannot take away, the peace of Jesus and Mary. This will come, this is promised by our Lord to His faithful followers. Let us then be faithful; let us perseveringly push forward; let us so strive that we may obtain. Peace in this

Digitized by Google

world, eternal peace in the next, is promised to those who overcome.

Why do we so hesitate? Why do we so shrink from the least contradiction? We make our labour, our troubles; in fact, a great part of our suffering is due to our opposition to them. Let us but resolve generously to firstly take patiently the contradictions sent us by God, then to take them gladly, and it may be that afterwards we shall be glad of them, since we shall have found the benefit to our soul derived from the cross, and we shall feel our souls so strengthened by its lightest touch *well borne*, (for it must be ever remembered it is not the greatness of the suffering, but the manner in which we bear it, that renders it profitable to us,) that we shall, in thanking God for His mercies to us, thank Him especially for the crosses His love sent us. But by penance and mortification I mean especially, not the sanctifying cross that brings such wonder-working powers with it, I mean the necessary daily mortification of will that we must practice, if we would lead the most ordinary Christian life, and yet which some people aiming at the supernatural life do not think it

Digitized by Google

necessary to trouble about. Ah, what a sad pity to see so many half-hearted people: if they are not quite what the Scripture speaks so strongly about, they are very near it, they are very near to being so. What are these words? "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth." Now sanctity cannot be attained without mortification. No good thing can be done, even in earthly affairs, without trouble. How then can we expect it should be so in heavenly matters? God has given us a mind: we have memory, understanding, will, all to be employed in His service. We have hearts to love; bodies to suffer: we must devote them to God's service. Let us not fear the struggle at the commencement. Do not, for the love of your miserable self, for love of the deceitful world, or for the temptations of the devil, do not let us, on account of the little trouble it may be to us, not do all we can for the good God. Oh, for the love of Jesus let us resolve to daily try and grow more and more detached from all things. Let us daily strive more and

Digitized by Google

more to be all for God, to live for God alone, to love for God alone.

Religion is something for which we must make sacrifices. Religion is not a worship of feeling, of sentiment. It does not consist in fine feelings, in shedding tears. It does not consist in long prayers. It essentially consists in sacrifice; the sacrifice of our own will first, and without which no sacrifice is pleasing or acceptable to God. What is a sacrifice to one is not to another. Let us not then deceive ourselves, by perhaps, like Cain, making a sacrifice, or rather an offering, that we do not care for, and keeping to ourselves what we do care for; that is but mocking God. Let us search into ourselves, and let us give a whole offering; the best we have we must give to Him Who is above and before all others, our good God. Let us stir ourselves up, if need be, to please God. Let us displease ourselves. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent alone carry it away.

The devotion we are advocating, we repeat again, does not lead to any spirit of spiritual inaction. It keeps a soul constantly employed. How hard we see

Digitized by Google

some people really try to acquire virtue, but it is like building without a foundation. Let us keep to the one thing, the denial, the renunciation of ourselves, the entire surrender of our own will; and when the foundation of humility is well dug, when the foundations are secure, the edifice that is raised will seem to grow of itself; the angels will so assist, their Queen will herself work, and the temple of God will be formed within. Beautifully, orderly, grandly, will the soul shine in the sight of God, that is formed by Mary to be a dwelling-place for her Son. To acquire virtue without overcoming one's self, without self-denial, is impossible; but let a person once well struggle to overcome himself in *little* things as well as great, for all have not alike to overcome, and it may happen that a person with less visibly to overcome may let those slight defects or imperfections, or whatever branch of self it may be they need most to overcome, they may let these more hidden imperfections lie disfiguring their soul, these little tenacities of self-love strike deeper root than some great visible defect.

If we wish to be perfect, and thanks be

Digitized by Google

to our dear Lord we do wish it, we must examine ourselves not only upon the commandments, but we must examine ourselves upon the counsels, the wishes, and the desires of the Heart of Jesus. Ah, how often He looks wistfully upon some chosen souls whom He has preserved by His grace from any grievous sin; they have observed His commandments from their youth up, but He calls them to renounce something for His love, something they may lawfully possess, some creature, or some created thing, and they are struck sad; and the view of these selfish souls saddened our dear Lord's Heart on earth, when He saw how many of those who had been most loaded with His grace would be less generous with Him. Ah, how many poor sinners, who have received but one of those "touches" from God, which the more favoured souls have so often received, than they are all for God, no sacrifice is too great for them to make, no contempt more than they deserve. The evil of these hidden imperfections in the souls of those who are otherwise free from great defects is so great that it can hardly be exaggerated. It is certainly the reason

Digitized by Google

there are so few saints. Let us then resolve to make a business of this matter, this cleansing and purifying of our soul. Let us be as earnest as in the cleansing and restoring of anything we value, and do not like to see soiled. Let us set to work in earnest. Do not let us be turned aside by any deceits of the devil, more particularly that grand temptation of his, scrupulosity. No, let us be in earnest; let us be brave; let us be zealous: but let us avoid scrupulosity, fidgettiness, or aught that does not savour of the liberty that should be enjoyed by the children of God, that grand gift which God gave in the beginning, which sin deprived us of, but which penance will restore. Yes, the wholesome mortification inculcated in the following meditations, mortification of will, will restore us to that tender friendship with God which could not doubt Him, could not think hard thoughts of Him, could not look upon Him as aught but the good loving Father He is, and ever will be, if we are faithful loving children to Him.

The great means of ensuring our deriving profit from our meditations is to

Digitized by Google

realize, as far as possible, the Presence of God, and to place ourselves in that Presence in a contrite, humble, reverential spirit. An act of contrition to commence with; an invocation to our Lady, a drawing close to her according as our devotion inclines us, either as a little child in her arms, or at her feet, or kneeling by her side, or resting as it were within her in a way we could not explain; then a sigh to Jesus, a spiritual communion: and thus prepared, we may think of the few thoughts thrown out as profitable to be reflected upon. We know that union with God is the object, the end of prayer, but we should not be anxious to force ourselves, we may say, ungracefully to that union. Let us acknowledge truthfully that we are unworthy of God's notice, and this humility then so pleases Him that He may stop and caress us; then it is good for us to open our hearts to His Love, not to indulge ourselves, but to make us love Him more, to detach ourselves from the love of creatures; and it is then good to cease our own thoughts, to speak no word, but listen to God's whisper, which will work more effectually in our

Digitized by Google

souls than the words of any one, however good and true those words may be. But we must not expect or look for special favours in prayer. We should always do our own part by preparing our soul, bringing a contrite humble heart, being earnest in driving away distractions and making resolutions; but, nevertheless, if God calls us to make an act of love of Himself by showing us how loveable He is in Himself, or how He loves us, if we spend the whole of our time in that act of love we shall have spent our time well; we shall most certainly have an earnest resolution to do all we can to please the good God who is alone worthy of our love and service. We must make the resolution to see Him in others, to serve Him in others, to love Him in all around. We shall surely multiply our little acts in the day, the acts of love, the acts of self-sacrifice by which love is shown, and then our meditation will indeed have been fruitful.

Why is it our meditations are so dry and distracted? Why is it some say they cannot meditate at all? What is the hindrance? In many it is the want of the remote preparation, that is to say,

Digitized by Google

their thoughts being always accustomed to worldly matters, are with difficulty brought to bear on heavenly things. It is a strain. It is tiring. They are not interested in things they cannot see or hear; their hearts are full of self-interest, and they take so much pleasure in their own plans and schemes, that they cannot take interest in Almighty God's plans. They cannot sit and think of the great things He has done; they cannot join themselves to His great designs on their behalf, to the loving plans He has for the good of all men. Oh, no; they are full of little plans and schemes which all revolve around their little selves, and they are so cumbered with them that their minds are not capable of what they are principally intended for, the contemplation of God. How shall we remedy this evil? By a guard over our thoughts, by guiding and directing them constantly to God. Not with such an effort that it would be a strain not good for our minds, but sweetly and gently let us lead them to God. In our leisure moments let us return to the thought of God. To people aiming at perfection this is absolutely necessary.

Digitized by Google

Without interior recollection no great good in the spiritual life will ever be attained. It will not clog our minds and hinder us thinking clearly of what is necessary. No; the study of God opens our minds, elevates our understanding, and makes us take a right view of matters. We can think better of our necessary business in the presence of God; we can work better in His presence than out of it, that is to say, out of it by forgetfulness, for we really never are out of it. It may be some effort, first of all, the making the constant acts of recollection, but those who make these acts will be well repaid after, when they constantly walk in God's holy Presence, when their souls are filled with the unction of grace they thus acquire. Let that be our first thought in commencing these meditations. Let us think of the necessity of meditation, if we wish to make any progress, and that the profit to be derived from meditation depends in a great measure upon our own efforts, and that if we do meditate, and meditate well, we shall certainly progress and attain to what we are all desiring, a close union with God, a dear familiarity, ever accompanied by the re-

Digitized by Google

verential fear which pierces us through and through, as it does the heavenly spirits, who, swimming in extasies of Divine Love, as they look upon God ever adore Him, Who is so infinitely adorable, the Great Maker of all things, the God of might and power, Whom, as we look upon too in our present way by meditation, we too must love with every power given to us, and tremblingly acknowledge there is no one like to Him, and rejoicingly exclaim, "To Him be glory, praise, and benediction for ever and ever." Yes, meditation is our present great means of loving God. As the angels feed their love by looking upon the Face of their God, and proclaim in rapturous song: "There is none like to Him;" so as we look upon our God in our daily meditation, we shall feel our hearts moved to exclaim: He is a good great God, He is God alone, He is our own God, He is All in all, He is All to us. Yes, in our meditations in the church, in our chambers, in our daily work, if we think of God we must love Him; and therefore as we do want to love Him we will constantly bend our thoughts upon Him, and increase our knowledge that we may increase our love.

Digitized by Google

The meditations given commence with the thought of one's self, but it is to clear away the hindrances of self-love that hinder us looking upon God and seeing Him as He is. We must ever remember this knowledge of self: this endeavour to see ourselves must ever accompany the knowledge of God, the endeavour to know His infinite perfections.

Let us not forget in our meditations this: If we have endeavoured to know ourselves, if we have gone to prayer not to please ourselves, but to render ourselves more pleasing to God, to please Him, we shall, in course of time, receive from God that great gift of prayer, of union with Him, which is a grace well worth striving for and mortifying ourselves to attain: that delightful familiarity with Jesus, which indeed is heaven begun on earth, when Jesus seems so really part of ourselves, that we can speak to Him simply, openly, in all places, at all times, when He is indeed All in all to us, when our prayer to Him needs no prelude, when to place ourselves in His Presence would seem a strange act since He is ever with us, Jesus, our Lord, our Love, Who so

Digitized by Google

desires us to speak to Him, Who so desires our love. Why do we not strive to please Him more? Why do we not constantly seek to love Him? If we thought of Him, if we meditated upon Him, if we constantly turned to Him, if we offered Him little hidden acts, little self-sacrifices every hour of the day: why do we not? Because we do not think. Indeed, "with desolation is the whole land desolate, because no one thinketh in his heart!" We will then think of Thee, dear Jesus; we will indeed strive to love Thee alone, to love Thee only, our only Good. If we every day set ourselves to think of God, to earnestly seek to know Him, we shall surely love Him more, we shall surely strive to please Him more.

There is one thing to be remarked regarding meditation. That, as before said, if our meditation consists of simply one act of love of God, it will be a good employment of the time of meditation; so likewise if we remain quietly in the Presence of God, without any particular reflection, it will be of benefit to us. We might kneel at the feet of our Lady, realizing her sweetness; we might feel our

Digitized by Google

dear angel guardian's presence, and love and wish to honour him; we might be drawn higher, nearer into the embraces of the Adorable Trinity, and be allowed a foretaste of the joys of heaven. We may taste, even on earth, a little of the peace and happiness reserved for us in heaven if we are faithful. We may taste the sweetness of the God made Man, even when we are not receiving Him in Holy Communion, for we are "members of His Body, His Flesh, and His Bones." Those who keep themselves free from sin have that constant union with their Lord, truly feel His Presence, walk with Him, speak with Him at all hours, live by Him, for Him, with Him, in Him. Yes, live in God truly. Do we not breathe Him? He is in the air we breathe. When we lay our heads on our pillows God is there. When we are in our most distracting employments God is with us. Ah, life is sweet, even the life of sorrows, to those who thus walk in the happy, holy Presence of their God. It is worth the harassing conflict with self; it is worth the stripping ourselves of all we love best on earth, that is to say, that we love with a selfish love, a

Digitized by Google

love that draws us from God, for we should indeed love our dear ones, we should indeed love those whom God even commands us to love, and true love of others draws us to God.

It is the love of ourselves we have to fight against. It is the world we have to fight against. It is the deceits and allurements of the devil we must combat with all our strength; and we will, with God's grace; we will search into ourselves, we will not close our eyes to what is bad in us, we will be glad at every little nastiness we discover in ourselves, we will not try to gloss it over. No, those who are striving for the grand virtue of self-knowledge, otherwise humility, would strive to find themselves as bad as as they can, because they know, however they may receive light from God to know themselves they never can see themselves as He sees them; they never can know their own unworthiness as the good merciful God knows it. Ah, if we knew His Wisdom, which sees all things, without remembering His mercy, which is so compassionate to our miseries, we might well think then God could not love us. As with

Digitized by Google

some people, who instinctively feel they are read by some saintly soul, they do not love that holy person so much as some less advanced in sanctity. They do not think they can be liked, perhaps, if they are known; or it may be their self-love is too great to allow them to love those who know their defects. But this humility, which all should strive for, so strips one of self-love, that the soul hates itself when it sees itself in its true colours, or rather when it sees itself but a little in its true light, so that all the love which is inherent to us, and which would be bent upon loving ourselves, is bent upon the One Who is alone worthy of our love, Who is alone beautiful, perfect, most adorable, the great good good God. There is nothing in one's self to like, we have found that out: we hate ourselves with a holy hatred; we must love something, we love the Vast Ocean of all Goodness, our God. This is the grand fruit of humility, the intense love of God it brings with it. There is no seeking to please himself, even in his devotions, with the humble person. No, he does not love himself, he can find no pleasure in pleasing himself. His acts are

Digitized by Google

acts of pure love of God. His days are full days, since they are days spent for God. Crosses come, but they do not cross him. They are taken in patience, since the humble person knows that there is nothing can happen to him he does not deserve; therefore, this not being a theory with them, but something they daily put in practice, they take the daily crosses of life patiently when they consider they deserve them; then they take them joyfully when they consider how deserving God is of their love, and therefore they have by suffering an opportunity of showing their love, of showing that they do esteem their God above all things. These humble souls are the happiest in the world, they have no trouble as others have on account of the disesteem or contempt of others; having humility, knowing themselves, they do not esteem themselves; having humility, viz., truthfulness, they do not wish to be thought to have what they have not. Those souls are happy, likewise, in the knowledge they have in the possession of God's grace. They see it more clearly than others, they see God's grace in themselves and others more clearly than

Digitized by Google

those who are not so humble, so emptied of self-love; and this again makes them happy, for it is not humility, as some falsely think, not to see God's grace in one's self. No, when a soul is rooted in humility, it so plainly sees the working of God, and feels His help and assistance, that that soul may, through its very humility, appear presumptuous, self-confident, boastful, saying: "I can do all things!" but it ever adds: "in Him Who strengtheneth me."

These preparatory meditations, then, are of the utmost consequence. They may appear dry, they may be distasteful, but who would not take bitter medicine to cure himself of disease, or even some slight disorder? Let the twelve days devoted to the salutary endeavour to get rid of the spirit of the world, and the one week devoted to endeavouring to know one's self to obtain the grace of graces, humility, be persisted in, despite all disgust, indolence, disquietude, or whatever other hindrance the devil may put in the way of their being pursued zealously, the result will be well worth the trouble. Mary will draw near to you, Jesus will bless you, the

Digitized by Google

Holy Spirit will perpetually abide with the soul that is emptied of its own spirit, that is divested of the world and itself, that is ever living so close in the company of Mary, that it is proof against the deceits of the devil. It will proceed securely along the sweet path of Mary, conducted by angels, and will one day happily arrive at its heavenly home, where it will rest with the Incarnate Word in the Bosom of the Eternal Father for ever ever more. Amen, amen.

Digitized by Google

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF MARY.

The following Spiritual Exercises are written upon the plan of the Venerable De Montfort. There is likewise a further explanation of the devotion inculcated in the "Path of Mary." Many who have read the latter-mentioned work may have already made their Act of Consecration to Mary; nevertheless they will find wondrous graces attached to their following the plan advised by the saintly writer of "True Devotion," followed by the renewal of the act already made.

It is the same with this devotion as with the sacraments. The sacraments are not charms; they act according to our co-operation with them. So with this devotion: the effects it will produce in our souls rest with ourselves. As with the sacraments some souls are wonderfully advanced in the way of perfection by

Digitized by Google

frequenting them, from the good dispositions with which they receive them, and likewise from the good use they make of the graces they have received from them; whilst other souls seem to advance very little from their use of the sacraments: so it is with this devotion. We may find the same difference in those who make the solemn act by which they once for all, for time and eternity, give themselves to Mary, after the example of the Son of God, who for all eternity will be the Son of Mary. The act has to work within them a change; Mary has to throw the mantle of her maternal protection specially round the soul now her very own. She is anxious to work in that soul; to influence it; to bring the Holy Spirit to press, and invigorate, and form it to a new life. But the soul must be pliable, docile; it must be ready to be moulded. If it is stubborn, self-willed, rigid, how can it be moulded into the likeness of Jesus? How can Mary influence it? See, then, the importance of the preparatory exercises, by which the soul is divested of self-love, and of love of the world. We all know the grand effects of the sacrament of

Digitized by Google

baptism; we know well that, besides cleansing the soul from sin, the three great virtues of faith, hope, and charity are planted in the soul of the unconscious child. All baptised may receive the same graces, but how different are the after effects in some souls to others! See, in the years that follow, how children who have received this wonder-working sacrament permit the graces they received at Baptism to be lost. See how faith dies away, hope withers, charity grows extinct. See how bright the virtues are in some, how dim in others. Baptism is indeed re-generation, a new birth. We can be baptised but once; but though we cannot twice receive baptism, we can renew its effects within us whenever we please. Thus it is with the devotion recommended; it is a marvellous "secret" of grace. Its effects in the soul are truly wonderful, but these are not seen all at once, and the "transformation" caused in the soul does not take place at once; and likewise the graces which it is promised will be given to those who adopt the devotion are given according to the co-operation of each soul with the graces given, according to the spirit with which the

Digitized by Google

soul enters and continues in the Path of Mary. The solemn renewal of the act is most efficacious; and preparation of soul, renunciation of self, and docility, are absolutely necessary to receive the fulness of grace promised, and daily acts of union with Jesus and Mary are also necessary. See how essential they are from this fact. You wish to imitate Jesus, by giving yourself to Mary. Now behold how Jesus, like other children, was under the influence of His Mother in the womb. He was there formed by the operation of the Holy Ghost. The sweet soul and spirit of Mary was possessed by the Holy Spirit of God; and as naturally the thoughts, wishes, and feelings of a mother influence her unborn child, so was it with Jesus in the womb of Mary; she receiving from on high—from the Father and from the Eternal Word—the Holy Spirit. The Human Soul of Jesus joined her pure soul in union with itself, and never allowed to be disunited for one instant, or in the slightest particular, her soul from that union of thought, of feeling, and desire. What she wished Jesus wished; what Jesus wished she wished. There was not the slightest

Digitized by Google

ruffle or division of feeling of any kind. So with the influence of an ordinary mother upon her unborn child. The mother influences it for both good and bad. The child in the womb does not, cannot resist. If the mother's dispositions were perfect, her child would probably be born with good dispositions also. Now, in one sense, Our Lady would have us like the unresisting child unborn, in our docility and pliability: and she would have us like our Lord, in that we have the full use of our reason, and yet are entirely obedient and humble in our submission and entire renunciation of our own inclinations, wishes, and will to her.

Our natural inclinations turn to self. Our business is to make ourselves supernatural. Therefore this devotion preeminently keeps us employed in combating self; for whenever we find ourselves disturbed or ruffled we must examine and see how this is. We shall surely find it, if we examine truthfully, to have proceeded from self. We had forgotten that we had renounced ourselves, that we had entirely given ourselves up, that we were trying to keep ourselves in one simple state of

Digitized by Google

docility and humility, which would enable Mary to work in us, and form Jesus in us. But she cannot if we will appear to be something, if we will assert ourselves. If the clay rise up against the potter forming it, how can the vessel be formed? The wisest thing we can do, the one thing we must do to enter properly into this grand and sublime devotion, is to entirely renounce ourselves. We then have no rights, we have no wrongs; we have nothing, we are nothing. It is not a devotion that inclines to laziness in spirituality, to a presumptuous expectation of graces whether we have or not corresponded as we ought with our ordinary grace, or a sort of devotion by which we may expect to drift on in the way of perfection, and advance without any trouble. Oh no! we do indeed, when well advanced on the Path of Mary, seem to be carried rather than to be walking; but it is when self is subdued, when we have fought with it and brought it down, when we have made room for Jesus by having cast out our self-love, then all does indeed seem easy, then our lives indeed become beautiful, then our conversation is really with heaven; we carry heaven

Digitized by Google

within us, for where Jesus is there is heaven, and Jesus dwells in the soul that is emptied of self. He is, to the persons who thus possesses Him, as their very heart. All we think and do is virtually, if not always actually, in union with Him. Your labours, pleasures, thoughts, wishes, all are passed through the Heart of Jesus. You have no honour and glory but His, and if, when thus united to the Author of all holiness, you see yourself so barren, so destitute of what there should be in you, certainly will you soon receive from God grace to clothe your soul with virtue. Since you will love Him, you will be obliged to rejoice that He is so good, that He has all grace, goodness, virtue; and you will likewise love others, since you will see and rejoice in His grace in them: thus you will love them, since you love His grace in them; and having love, your soul will please God; and thus replenished with love, you will let your light of love shine before the world. Yes, you will love from your heart, where Jesus lives in love; you will pour this love upon those outside; you will see God everywhere; you will see Him in His creatures,

Digitized by Google

you will love Him in them; you could not cherish a hard thought of a creature God loved. You could not, possessing within you the Holy Spirit of love, you could not think hard thoughts, you could not speak harsh words, you could not say to those around what you perhaps now say without scruple. Oh, no; you will have a kind look for all, a kind word, a kind deed. We should then do good; again and again it might be said: "If you would save your brother love him:" thus our love will unconsciously show itself, it could not be kept in. "See how these Christians love one another," it was said of old. Oh, yes, and let it be said of Mary's own: they love one another in word, in deed, and in truth. Thus, as in heaven, love seems to have burst forth and to have shown itself visibly, to have been unable to be kept within its eternity, and to have sprung forth like a river, which would indeed have flowed silently, swiftly, and tranquilly back to the vast ocean from which it sprang, if sin had not troubled and changed its course, so now let us go on our way to the haven of love, by living lives of love. Love to God the Most High, the infinite Creator, the God who

Digitized by Google

made all things, who is alone worthy of our love. Love to all that He has created, love all one another, love to all around. Thus shall we seek our centre of divine love, the bosom of the good, good God, who is everywhere loveable, most desirable, most worthy of our love, but who is treated by so many of us as one who may be loved or slighted, reverenced or neglected at pleasure. This is how it seems to be on this weary earth, which for centuries has been teeming with sins, which would deserve hell again and again, if God's mercy were not infinite as well as His justice, if His mercy were not above all His works, if His mercy had not waited for us, been patient with us, watched and tended us with patience which none on earth possesses but God. Yes, long ago would our nearest and dearest have turned us off and refused to listen to us, or have anything to do with us, if we had treated them as we have treated Him, the long-suffering, meek, gentle, compassionate, merciful God, who is mercy, patience, beauty, sweetness itself, and who yet is despised and disregarded as the least and last in His own creation. Yes, as the Jews treated Jesus

Digitized by Google

so do we treat God. Jesus showed us visibly how the invisible God had been treated. Let us, in silent adoration before the Sacred Heart of our Lord, offer reparation to our God. Let us offer the beatings of that Adorable Heart as our worship to the Ever Blessed Trinity, the only worship worthy of the infinite Majesty of God, and by which alone we can make satisfaction to it.

Digitized by Google

RETREAT

PREPARATORY TO RENEWING BAPTISMAL VOWS,

AND MAKING ENTIRE CONSECRATION TO

MARY.

THE FIRST TWELVE DAYS TO BE DEVOTED TO WITHDRAWING FROM THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD.

FIRST MEDITATION.

The meditations should be made in the presence of Our Lady. Put yourself as a little child in her arms, and ask her to show you how to divest yourself of the spirit of the world. The spirit of the world is opposed to the Spirit of God; therefore should you be anxious to search out every place within you where this taint of worldliness may lurk. Recollect it is of vast importance to do this; because,

Digitized by Google

if you clear out within you what formerly you made a place for, something must fill the empty place. "Nature abhors a vacuum." In place of the selfish spirit you formerly cherished will come the Holy Spirit of God. Ponder over this. Animate yourself to desire most earnestly to cast away from yourself all that will prevent your being replenished with God's Holy Spirit. You are desiring to begin a new life with Jesus in Mary. You wish to give yourself entirely to her as He did. Your Mother is longing to make another Jesus of you. It is by the operation of the Holy Ghost that you will be born again. Renounce yourself then, and place yourself in the hands of Mary, that she may fill you with the Holy Ghost. Draw the resolution from this meditation to desire earnestly to be emptied of the evil spirit, the spirit of the world, and your own selfish spirit, that there may be in you no obstruction to God's Spirit, and to your being born to a new life and transferred into Jesus. Think of some aspirations, that you will repeat frequently to remind you of the resolutions you have drawn from this meditation.

Digitized by Google

SECOND MEDITATION.

The object of this meditation is to clear away from your soul whatever will hinder the working of God's Holy Spirit within you. You must be as a piece of land prepared for sowing. At present your soul is not as clear from defects as it should be. Many rank weeds may have been growing for a long time in it. You have often set it in order, and some of the weeds you may have pulled up, but the rest you have allowed to grow; or you have contented yourself with cutting off the tops, and the roots are still within. Our present object, then, must be to root out these ugly weeds. Do you know the weak part of your soul? If you do a great point is gained. If you do not, turn up the ground until you discover and bring to light the root of sin within you. Is it pride, self-love, anger, human respect, want of charity either in thought or action, insincerity, or any of those noxious weeds which root themselves so strongly within us, and which, though we know how opposed they are to the God of all holiness and purity,

Digitized by Google

we nevertheless foster tenaciously? Ask through Mary that the Holy Spirit may enlighten you, may show you your soul. Remain for some time with the view of your defects, expose them to the light of the presence of God in which you have placed yourself, and they will wither as roots when exposed to the sun.

THIRD MEDITATION.

By the preceding meditation you brought to light what was most opposed to the reign of God within you. What have you now to do? You may be quite convinced of the necessity of ridding yourself of all hindrances to your pleasing God, and your will may be very good to do it; but a good will does not suffice alone, you must oppose strongly the contrary virtue to your predominant passion. For instance, continued acts of simple obedience will obtain for you the virtue of obedience in an eminent degree; whereas long meditations, considerations, etc., upon the beauty of obedience would not do so. We should perform unnecessary acts of any virtue to obtain that virtue. If you are too much afraid of

Digitized by Google

the opinions of others, make little acts that you otherwise would not have done for fear of what would be said of you. If you are given to impatience, recollect now some occasions when you gave way to anger, and make the acts of patience now that you should have made then. You desire to make the consecration for which you are now preparing as pleasing to our Lady as possible, therefore, do not let your want of earnestness mar your offering. Our Lady's love for you will not be cooled by your defects, however great, if she sees you sincerely desire to remove them. She may be even more tender with you, as we see earthly mothers are with the child that is afflicted. Trust yourself entirely to the good God, who is more anxious to assist you to overcome your defects than you are to overcome them. Conclude by thanking your good angel for his past care of you, and ask his especial help in the matter you have resolved to amend. Carry away with you an aspiration that will remind you of your resolution.

Digitized by Google

FOURTH MEDITATION.

ON CONSTANT WATCHFULNESS OVER OURSELVES.

To prevent an evil is far better, and is far easier, than to cure one already existing. To instance one example: how difficult it is for some persons to resist giving way to angry words when in a passion; but they might have prevented the fit of passion. They may have a very angry disposition, but constant recourse to the help God gives so readily would keep it in check. They are tempted to give way to anger in an unguarded moment; they were not watching, and the angry fit has taken firm hold, and they act as if beside themselves, as in fact they are, and for the time are as much or rather more to be pitied, than people out of their mind. Most of our evils proceed from want of watchfulness over ourselves. Before we are aware of it, Satan has hold of us, infusing into our minds suspicions, scruples, and temptations of various kinds, which, when allowed entrance, are difficult to overcome. Even good people listen to his sugges-

Digitized by Google

tions, and are often unconsciously his tools. Let us make a resolution to keep our simple rules exactly, as in doing so there will be less chance of the enemy of our soul finding a loophole where he may enter. Conceive a great horror of being made a tool of Satan, as you so often heretofore have been, though not intending to be so. Constant recourse to Mary during your actions will prevent this evil. The words Jesus and Mary should be often on your lips.

FIFTH MEDITATION.

ON THE SAME.

One great evil we have to guard against is the loss of grace. In the last meditation we saw the necessity of constant watchfulness over self; but that will not suffice. "Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain who build it." We must have constant recourse to God. We must not neglect the seemingly smallest grace. I say *seemingly smallest*, because the smallest grace is great. Turn to your angel guardian; ask him to obtain

Digitized by Google

for you to esteem, somewhat as he does, the grace attached to the pious use of holy water, or to a priest's blessing, and that you should be as anxious to obtain these graces as God is anxious that you, His child, should obtain them. It is from the loss of some grace that every evil in this world proceeds. You cannot dread it too much. If you would be *in* the world, but not *of* it, you must value grace. If you would be pure, (and by the virtue of purity, and in the sense in which I am now using it, I mean entirely detached from the world,) you must be most assiduous, you must be most earnest in obtaining grace. We see many people labouring hard, making their lifetime one long night of struggle, and yet their endeavours are not successful. They have "laboured hard and taken nothing." They think to succeed by themselves. They neglect little graces, aye, and great ones too. They rely upon themselves. They may be most austere, they may watch and fast, they may do most severe penance: but they do not succeed as those who, so to speak, live upon God, upon God's precious grace, who chant blithely: "I looked

Digitized by Google

towards the hills, (the high mountain of God,) from whence cometh help; my help is in the *Name* of the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth." I emphasize the word *Name*, to show you that the Psalmist found his strength simply in the name of God. How much more should the Christian then seek from God Himself, Whom he possesses, Whom he need not seek on the high mountain, on the far off hills, but close to his home in the tabernacles, close to his heart in Holy Communion. Conclude, whilst you resolve to be ever earnest in employing all the natural means God has given you in His service, not to rely upon them, but upon God alone. Place yourself and your resolution in the Heart of Mary, making a spiritual communion. And this resolution, never to lose any grace, may be one of the most important of your life. It may lead to your obtaining that grand grace by which the Author of all grace, our dear Lord Himself, will ever dwell with you, by a special grace known only to a few.

Digitized by Google

SIXTH MEDITATION.

ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF NATURAL MEANS FOR OBTAINING ANY SPECIAL OBJECT.

In order that from the foregoing meditation there should be no false conclusion drawn, I wish that you should now consider how that, though we oppose the spirit of the world, that spirit which thinks it can do everything by its own industry and endeavours alone, still we must not fall into the opposite extreme, and imagine that God will help us in some extraordinary way, without our doing our own part. Now God may help us in some extraordinary way; He may give us some extraordinary graces: but He requires us to do the three things that are necessary to be employed whenever we wish to attain an object, viz.: to work, pray, and suffer. Whether it be our own sanctification, or some work for the good of our neighbour, we must work as earnestly with the natural means God has given us as the world does. We may do so apparently unsuccessfully, to the eyes of the

Digitized by Google

world our undertaking may have failed; then, when we have done our best, God will put His hand to the work in some unexpected way, and bring it to a successful issue. What a pity people will not trust more in God, and grow so soon disheartened. This is why they do not oftener succeed. Those who cannot bear apparent failure will never do any great work for God. To give a little example of what I mean. You may have had to beg for some charitable purpose. You have set off early in the morning; you have travelled miles wearily from house to house, and not received a penny. Either the people were out, or they would not give. At the end of the day you have spent yourself and received nothing. A worldly spirit would say: "What a wasted day!" It would, however, be a very meritorious one. Suppose also, as in the case instanced, which is indeed a true one, the very next day a sum of money, sufficient to pay all the expenses, were advanced by some charitable person, the same worldly spirit would cry out: "Dear me, I lost my time yesterday. What a pity! If I had waited till to-day I

Digitized by Google

might have saved all that trouble." One not possessed of such a worldly spirit, and more enlightened by the Spirit of God, would see that if you had not taken that trouble, you would not have had the money. Having used natural means God rewarded them. In all things it is the same. Do what you are doing earnestly. It may not succeed in the least, but it will induce God to act in some other way. I impress this upon you most constantly. It will take some time to understand this truth; it is so contrary to the spirit of the world. But our present object is to get rid of the spirit of the world; this dust and dirt, which it is so difficult to clear away from our souls, which, as we set about the work, seems to rise up in clouds and confuse us. The dew of divine grace will fall, allaying these clouds, and help us to sweep away from our souls what hinders Jesus loving them as He would wish. And our trouble will be well rewarded when Mary presents those souls to Jesus, and He, bending over them, sees them bright and beautiful, sees His own image reflected in them, and folding them to Himself, pronounces them blessed.

Digitized by Google

SEVENTH MEDITATION.

ON EXTREMES.

How seldom do even good people keep to the happy medium! Now the essential spirit of the world is to go to extremes; and this spirit affects good people too. Sin is an excess, and most excesses are sins. There is no such thing as sin itself; that is to say, it is not an entity as grace is. Therefore impress this strongly upon yourself: the necessity there is for your never going to excess in thought, word, or deed, as shown in the preceding meditation. Some people trust that God will do everything, they have only to rely upon Him. Ah, what a mistake! What terrible evil has this supineness of Catholics brought upon the Church! They are quite sure the cause of God must triumph in the end; and in the meantime they remain calmly indifferent. Many people pray earnestly—some do not even do that—but there is something wanted besides prayer: work. "I work and My Father works." If we look into the countries of

Digitized by Google

Europe, do we see Catholics bestirring themselves earnestly in God's cause? Alas! we too often see rather a supine indifference to their political responsibilities, an indifference which has led to disastrous results. The same gross neglect, for which many Catholics will have to give a severe account, permeates all matters: municipal elections, children not entered as Catholics in workhouses, children not being baptized as soon as possible, etc., the minute details of daily life. The resolution you should make and draw from this meditation, is to thank God for the gifts He has given you; to thank Him for every faculty you have, to resolve to employ them for His greater honour and glory. Rejoice that you have a mind, that can think and know God; a body that can work and suffer for Him; a heart that can love Him; a soul that, though you may have disfigured its glorious beauty, you can, by His grace, restore to its pristine splendour, and make more and more beautiful. Hide not from yourself the greatness of the being you have received from your good Creator; but look upon it as a solemn duty not to hide your talent in a napkin, but earnestly to em-

Digitized by Google

ploy every part of your being in the service of God. Little creatures that you are, who cannot move your hand without the help of God, let there not be a part of you which is not devoted to Him. Not with the spirit of the world, as before said, the spirit that strains every nerve and energy to do something, and imagines it can succeed by its own endeavours alone, but the earnest spirit of self-devotion in the service of God, entire self-sacrifice, the use of every talent, with, at the same time, an entire reliance on God, with the entire consciousness and knowledge that our own endeavours will avail us nothing without His assistance.

EIGHTH MEDITATION.

We showed in the last meditation, the extremes people go to as regards trust in God, and the necessity of using our own abilities if we expect assistance from God. Now we will consider whether, granting we do use our own abilities to succeed in our works, can we after that put too much trust in God? No, most certainly we cannot. "He will have mercy on us

Digitized by Google

according to our trust in Him." This is the grand difference between good Christians and worldlings. The latter have not the least expectation of any help except from their own endeavours, or from the assistance of friends; but the child of God looks to its Father, the soul united to Jesus looks to her Lord with a security greater than that of the happy bride who looks to her husband with the knowledge that he will cherish her as his own flesh. Peaceful, wondrously peaceful is the soul that rests secure in the Heart of God, and trusts, whilst it performs its daily work, that there is a loving Providence looking to every want, and foreseeing every necessity, and supplying for that necessity in a way that nothing but divine Wisdom and Providence, and Love, could foresee and supply. "But why is it," you may ask, "do we not see oftener and more plainly interpositions of divine Providence?" There are three reasons: one is that you are so immersed in the cares of the world that you do not see the workings of divine Providence in your regard. You attribute what has happened for your good to chance, or to some kind friend, without regarding

Digitized by Google

in the least the part God had in the matter. Again, you sometimes think you have trusted in vain, when all the time you were in reality heard, but in a different way to what you expected. To give an example, a true instance. A certain soul, wishing to provide a chapel with a statue of Our Lady, and not having the means, thought she might obtain them in the following way. Something of considerable value had been lost on the sea-beach, near where she lived. A great reward was offered. "I will go down," thought this simple soul, "and search, and pray St. Anthony I may find it, get the reward, and buy the statue." But in vain did she search; her hope seemed to have been à vain one. Not long after, I think not many days, walking into the chapel, there she saw the long wished for statue of Our Lady; but even then, that soul, though she said her Magnificat in thanksgiving for her wish being realized, did not attribute it to her prayers and fatigue in searching for the lost property. But this is, as I said before, God's way of dealing with us. He does not always exactly answer our prayer as we wish. Again,

Digitized by Google

another reason we do not really obtain from God what we wish, is because we do not sufficiently trust Him. In fact, there are many people who do not seem to be aware that hope is a theological virtue, as well as faith or charity. It does seem that they have no hope at all; and they have not the least scruple upon the point. They may even consider their own want of hope, humility; and the hope of others presumption or pride: but do not let us imitate this sad example. We are endeavouring, by all the means we can, to get rid of the spirit of the world, and to be pure and bright even in the bad atmosphere of a corrupted world. Let us ever remember, then, that to be divested of the spirit of the world, and to draw a complete line between ourselves and the world, we must live in God's presence, and hope and trust in Him, even against hope; that is to say, even when it seems most certain that our hope is doomed to disappointment. Live, then, in God, by God, with God, for God alone; the good good God whom we mistakenly seek as far away from us, is near, so near, He is within us. "In Him we live, and move, and have our being."

Digitized by Google

Make, then, from this meditation, an earnest resolution to live, so to speak, in God, on His Word, on His promises, on His Love.

NINTH MEDITATION.

ON CONSULTING THE HOLY SPIRIT.

In the preceding meditation we resolved to cast our whole solicitude on God, knowing that He has care of us. But here again is needed a word of warning, lest we fall into extremes, and trusting that He is ever guiding and watching over us, we neglect to seek and consult Him at every turn, as He desires. How often we are in doubt what course to take regarding a certain matter. We puzzle ourselves, we consider, we resolve, first one thing then another; we may perhaps offer an indifferent doubting prayer, which we do not expect will be heard, and which in consequence will very likely not be answered. Many even do not that. Now we who are striving to withdraw from the spirit of the world must act very differently. "The spirit of the Lord hath

Digitized by Google

filled the whole earth." The world sees not the spirit of God pervading all things; but we who desire not to be of the world must live by the Holy Spirit, and see and take counsel at all times of the Good Counsellor. God desires we should seek Him at all times. He will not give to us unless we pray, that we may be ever seeking Him. He will not relieve us from our difficulties without we beg His assistance. He will not resolve our doubts unless we consult Him. This should be especially noted by those who live in the world, and have not the consolation and comfort of living under obedience, who are not able likewise to consult superiors in cases of doubt. Let them now take the firm resolution of making a hopeful prayer, with an invocation to Our Lady, that the Holy Spirit may enlighten and direct them in any matter of doubt. Then they may act, and even supposing it may appear to them that it would have been better if they had adopted some other course, they may rest assured they have done God's holy will, which is the one thing they came into the world to do. Even supposing before they have com-

Digitized by Google

menced to act upon the course they have determined to adopt, after having prayed, it appears to them another course would be better, let them not change their resolution without great reason. Resolve now earnestly to seek constantly the assistance of God's Holy Spirit, for guidance and direction during the duties of every day.

TENTH MEDITATION.

ON FULFILLING THE WILL OF GOD.

"All men seek their own." It is the spirit of the world to seek to please itself. It should be the essential spirit of every Christian to seek to please *God alone:* and this is done only by fulfilling His holy will. He who earnestly seeks and desires to perform God's will in all things, is, if we may not say perfect, very near God. This is the perfection of perfection, this devotion above all things, God's holy will. It is the highest sanctity. Ah, but it is not easy to attain. If you think it is easy, it shows you do not thoroughly comprehend what is required of you, required of those at least who would have the high-

Digitized by Google

est degree of this virtue. I have put before you the highest degree, simply to show those who perhaps may think they already possess this virtue in an eminent degree,—since they only desire, they say, to do God's will in all things—how really very far they are from having attained it. You perhaps are engaged in some good work that you are very anxious should succeed. Why are you anxious? Is it for God's glory, or is it for yourself? Now understand: I do not say you desire your work may succeed for any glory that may accrue to you; I am not supposing that of you at all; but you want it to succeed very often because of your own interest. There is too much of your own will. Now this is very natural. There is not the least wrong in it; but still it shows you have not yet arrived at that perfection of the conformity to God's will, which you perhaps thought you had. No, the perfection by which one rejoices in failure—or rather seeming failure—as much as success, is attained by few. It is not asked of you at present. The resolution I ask you to draw from this meditation is to do your actions because they are the will of God. Often pause in

Digitized by Google

the middle of your actions, to think if you are doing them for the fulfilment of God's will. This will repress over-eagerness and excitement in your manner of working, since, if you are acting simply because God wishes it, you will do them as He wishes them done. Strive, then, to conform yourself to the will of God in the smallest occurrences of life, as well as the greater. There are many people who will say "Fiat" to some great grief, some terrible blow, and who yet, at some small accident, show extreme displeasure and annoyance. If it is some such occurrence as losing a train by one minute's delay with some friend who met you, nevertheless you must conform your will to the will of God, who permitted it. Our life is filled with these small accidents. What occasions of merit we lose by not making good use of them!

ELEVENTH MEDITATION.

ON HUMAN RESPECT.

It is the spirit of the world, not only for men to "seek their own," that is to say, their own convenience, ease, and pleasure;

Digitized by Google

but to seek, as the end for which they live, the good opinion of others. From the child at school to the middle-aged woman or aged man, there is one thought ever in their minds: "What will their little world think of them?" For the child, her little world may consist of a few companions only: as she increases in age her world will increase likewise. If the aged man looks back through his life, the life that, to the world, looks so fair, what will he see—that is to say, if enlightened to see himself truthfully, a rare gift possessed by few? A constant succession of efforts to obtain the esteem of that world by whom he will be forgotten within a very short time after his death. Truthfully exclaimed the dying Cardinal,* when he spoke the memorable words: "Ah! if I had but served my God as faithfully as I have served my king, He would not have deserted me on my death-bed." Now you who are endeavouring to put away the spirit of the world, of course have determined to act to please God alone. In great matters you will probably choose God's side, no matter

* Wolsey.

Digitized by Google

how you may have to trample underfoot human respect. But in the smaller affairs of life, do you act only to please God? Does it ever happen to you to think to yourself, even if you do not put your thought into words, "What will so and so think of me if I do that? Shall I not be thought troublesome if I go and speak of this business?—shall I not be thought interfering," etc.? You can apply this to yourselves. We can all apply it to ourselves: and must confess that, in matters where it would be a great sin, sooner than yield to human respect, we would, by God's grace, give up our lives, and think it an honour. Nevertheless, in little or seemingly little matters, we do not always choose to do what may be most pleasing to God. We do not consult His wish. This even follows us to the confessional. We carry human respect even there, where we place ourselves at the foot of the cross, not alone to cleanse our souls from their stains, and have them made white and beautiful by the Precious Blood Jesus shed upon the cross for them, but likewise to receive counsel how to fashion our lives in conformity with our crucified Lord. Ah!

Digitized by Google

but it is a pity. If you were thought troublesome to anyone, it would not be a great matter, if Jesus, your love, is pleased with you. Resolve, then, that the fruit of this meditation shall be to put away from you, as you would a bad thought, any idea that may present itself to you, as to what you will be thought of if you take a certain course of action. In judging what is best to do of two lines of conduct, be sure you cannot make a true judgment while you are the slave of human respect.

TWELFTH MEDITATION.

ON CHARITABLENESS.

The spirit of the world is essentially an uncharitable one. The world cannot possess true charity. I am speaking here of charity to our neighbour. The numbers who possess charity to their neighbour in its perfection are very few, even in the Church of God. Charity is the fulfilling of the law. A truly charitable person is a saint. Would that we were convinced of this truth, that with prayers, tears, and penances, we might impetrate this virtue

Digitized by Google

of Our Lord, and so render ourselves pleasing to Our Lord. What does this virtue consist in, then? you may ask me. You deprive yourself to give to the poor. You have such a love for souls that, by the grace of God, you would lay down your life to save one. Yes, but as in the preceding meditation we saw that there are people who would die sooner than, through fear of human respect, offend God grievously; so, in like manner, we may now consider the multitude of people there are, who, though they may give great alms, and are ready to lay down their lives to save a soul, are far from being truly charitable, and from the same reason as we saw in the last meditation. People will do great acts of virtue, who will not perform the smaller acts of the same virtue, and for want of this do not possess virtue according to the will and wish of God. How did the saints become saints? Why were they saints? They were saints because they practised virtue in an eminent degree; and to practise virtue in an eminent degree, means, to practise it in the smaller particulars as well as the greater. They became saints by being careful in little mat-

Digitized by Google

ters; or rather, what seems to us a little matter, was to them a very great matter, since it was something to be done for the great and good God. The charity we should possess is a charity like to that in the Heart of Jesus; the charity that loves others in spite of their faults; the charity that judges not wrongfully, but judgeth just judgment; the charity that lets not the imperfections of others hinder us from discovering their good qualities; the charity, in fact, that thinks and acts towards others as the person who possesses that charity would have others act towards him. How rare is this virtue of charity! How few value as they should Our Lord's command to His apostles to love others as He had loved them. How had He loved them? As His Father had loved Him, "the Son of His love." Well might we make this the subject of our daily meditation. Jesus loves us as His Father loves Him, that is, if we are one of His. This thought, deeply rooted in our hearts, would be the best help to obtain love of others. If our hearts were joined as the heart of Mary is to the Heart of Love, if that Sacred Heart had breathed into us, in con-

Digitized by Google

sequence of that union, the spirit that animated it, the Spirit of Love, we should be filled and replenished with love, which could not be kept within bounds, but would overflow upon others; and in this we ourselves would seem to represent the Ever Blessed and Adorable Trinity, inasmuch as the love of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, seems not to have been able to to contain itself within the Godhead, but to have overflowed and formed creation, and poured itself upon the creatures whom itself had made. By the breath of the Lord were all things formed, and that breath is love. Rest here with the Mother of fair love, asking that pure fount of love that you may receive Love Incarnate. Mary, bring us thy Infant! Bring us Jesus, Jesus, our life, our love. Pour faith into our hearts; make our whole beings overflow with thy spirit, the spirit of love. Father! the children of Thy love cry out to Thee, that Thou mayest detach them from a world where Thou art not known. Adorable Trinity! God of love, from whom we came, to whom we go, let us commence in time what is Thy will for all eternity; to live by love, for love, in

Digitized by Google

love, and with love, and thus perform on earth what Thy blessed do in heaven. Amen, Amen.

CONCLUSION OF THE TWELVE DAYS' PREPARATION

FOR DIVESTING ONE'S SELF OF THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD.

We must here remember the words of Our Lord, the prayer He made to His Heavenly Father for us at the last supper: "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of this world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil. They are not of the world, as I also am not of the world. Sanctify them in truth. Thy Word is truth." (John xvii. 15, 16, 17.) The piety of people who are striving to detach themselves from the world is often unnecessarily displeasing to the world; I say *unnecessarily*, because, though it is quite a delusion to alter our conduct, our evotions, etc., first in one thing, then in another, in our endeavours not to give offence to the world, still we must remember the words: "I to the Jew became a

Digitized by Google

Jew, that I might gain the Jew." And likewise we must remember the advice to be all things to all men, and therefore avoid that unpleasant manner which some good people have, who are restrained and entirely locked up within themselves, and who show not the slightest interest in the affairs of others, or else an interest which it is easily seen is an effort. A person who possesses true charity has no need of effort to take interest in those around him. Our Lady's own copy her example. Now we cannot imagine Our Lady—even if we had not had the grand example of the Visitation—being locked up within herself, and simply forcing herself to unbend towards others. No, she was sweet and motherly to all around her. We need not consider the fact that, in the midst of that most wonderful mystery, the Incarnation, whilst tasting the ineffable sweetness of a union with God that no other creature ever has had, or ever will have, not even the blessed in heaven, Mary did not remain shut up from all creatures to enjoy her wonderful happiness, but hastened to sympathize and rejoice with her neighbour in hers. Let us then resolve, at the end of

Digitized by Google

these twelve days, when we have been striving to rid ourselves of the spirit of the world, if we would draw a line between ourselves and those of the world, to pray to obtain a Mary-like love for others. It is not in action, so much as in thought, that we have to be careful. It is in the uncharitable suspicions, thoughts, and rash judgments, that lead to uncharitable conduct. It is astonishing how lax our consciences are upon this point. If we allowed other thoughts, temptations against faith, etc., to dwell in our minds, as we do our uncharitable thoughts, we should indeed consider ourselves in a bad way. I wish people who hasten to their confessors with their minds full of trouble concerning their various temptations, would have a little trouble and scruple upon their want of charity to their neighbour. They will excuse themselves, saying, they cannot help their feelings. Such a person commits so many faults, behaves, perhaps, so unkindly to themselves, is so unjust, how can they think well of him? How can they love him? Now, the evil by which uncharitableness creeps into the soul has its origin, like most other evils in some-

Digitized by Google

thing small. You who at the present moment have the misfortune to feel an aversion to any one, or any want of charity, should ask yourself this question: Did you repress the first beginning in your mind, as you would any other temptation, your predominant passion, for instance, by earnest prayer, by invoking the names of Jesus and Mary, by taking holy water? No! You will most probably not recollect how it commenced; but begin to watch yourself more closely upon that point, and you will find you made perhaps not the slightest resistance to unkind, uncharitable thoughts, that displease the Heart of Jesus. Would you like to be told you had thought harshly of Our Lord Himself? Yet you know well that He takes to Himself what you do to others as done to Himself. This, then, is our final conclusion, after our twelve days endeavour to get rid of the spirit of the world: to be in the world, if it is the will of God, but not of it; to be devoted to God alone, and to see God in our neighbour. All men seek their own. All worldlings seek themselves. Let us seek God alone and His, the creatures for whom He shed His Precious Blood.

Digitized by Google

FIRST WEEK'S PREPARATION

MUST CONSIST IN OUR

EARNEST ENDEAVOUR TO KNOW OURSELVES.

The first thing that we must impress upon ourselves is, that *we are creatures.* There is a great deal more in this thought than may at first appear. We were created by a good God, and for a purpose. We therefore belong wholly to Him; and it is our duty to fulfil that purpose. Ask yourself candidly: have you always looked upon yourself in that light? Is it the case that when you have performed any seemingly great act of self-sacrifice, etc., you have regarded it as a small thing, and nothing more than your duty? If this is the light in which you regard all you do for God, well and good. It is a right light in which to view what you do, because it is a truthful light. Now, with many people, and they are well-intentioned people, they endeavour to hide what they do; they trouble themselves a great deal for fear of giving way to vanity; they think they are

Digitized by Google

bound not to know what they have done. To these good people I would say; pray for the grace to know yourself, and you will not then fear vanity. God, who is truth itself, does not wish you to be untruthful. He wishes you to know yourself, as far as it is possible. This self-knowledge will not come all at once. It will go on increasing till the day of your death. Nevertheless, if you strive earnestly to spend this week in the endeavour to know yourself, you will have made a great step towards laying the foundation stone to all sanctity, which is self-knowledge, the lowly sentiment of yourself as a creature, or in other words the virtue of humility. Perhaps you have not been aware hitherto how much you needed this virtue. Let the fruit of this meditation be a desire, a very earnest desire, to know yourself, with *some* of the knowledge with which God knows you. I say, with some of the knowledge, because you never will know your own nothingness and unworthiness as God does. Direct to this end your works, penances, and prayers,—always in union with Mary,—to obtain from God this great grace.

Digitized by Google

SECOND MEDITATION.

We were made by God, therefore we belong to Him, with all that we do, all our thoughts, words, and works. You are bound to devote yourself to His service, and seek His will in all things. You belong by right to God. You are—I will not say a servant, for a servant has rights—but I will say clearly, you are the slave of God; and if there were any other word by which I could express more strongly the idea I wish to impress upon you, of the absolute dominion God has over you, any more forcible word, I would use it. Consider well the truth of this, and you will acknowledge that God has greater rights over you than a master in former times had, in those countries were slavery was permitted, over his slaves. But you may object that Our Lord Himself says: "I have not now called you servants—more correctly translated slaves—but friends." That is true, indeed; but we are not to forget that our true position is evident from His words: "When you have done all that is com-

Digitized by Google

manded, say that you are unprofitable servants." If Our Lord, in His great love and goodness, raises us up, and calls us His friends, His loved children, He does not mean us on that account to forget our true position, and say: "We are slaves to no one." Yet how often this is said, even by those whose knowledge of theology should hinder their speaking what is really against the truth. "Mancipia Christi, slaves of Christ," are the words used in the Council of Trent concerning Christians. Let this truth, though perhaps unpalatable to you at first, sink into your mind. Put yourself in the presence of God, in your true position as His creature and His slave. He will love you with a special love, because you place yourself before Him in your true position.

THIRD MEDITATION.

The truth we reflected upon in our last meditation is so important that it will be well to consider it again more fully in the present. It is true, indeed, we are children of God, and if children, heirs also. But we must remember we are children

Digitized by Google

by adoption. If a master had released and raised one of his slaves to the rank of his child and heir, would he be pleased if that slave altogether forgot his former position, and never recurred to it, even so far as to thank the good master to whom he was indebted for his freedom and present position as his heir? No, most certainly not: the slave would be considered to have been rendered proud by his elevation, and would probably be disgraced. He would likewise be considered, and would in fact really be, ungrateful. I think it is St. Thomas who says: "true gratitude consists in esteeming a benefit as it deserves, and endeavouring to make our benefactor an adequate return." Therefore, a person who will not acknowledge what he owes another, who endeavours to keep it from his mind, cannot be a grateful person any more than he is a truthful person; and this would be another reason for making us try and discover our own nothingness, because it makes us more grateful to God. If we search thoroughly into what we are, creatures of God made to glorify Him, and bound by the fact of our creation to do so, as the sun or any other work of God is

Digitized by Google

bound to fulfil the end of its creation, it will make us think very little of what we do for God; but when we consider still further what He has done for *us*, raising us from the rank of slaves to that of His children, it will make us still more humble in the thought that we never can make Him anything like an adequate return. Imprint this thought in your mind, or rather ask Mary to instil into you a portion of her wonderful humility, that precious gift, for which the King of kings regarded this chosen one with a look of love beyond that given to any other creature, and raised her above the highest of the angels, and made her their queen.

FOURTH MEDITATION.

We have considered that, being a creature, a subject, we are bound to give service, and when we give that service, we do no more than our duty. This is what Our Lord would have us understand when He tells us that when we have done all that is commanded us, "we are still unprofitable servants." They are the words of Truth Incarnate; and we cannot even

Digitized by Google

speak of exaggeration in connection with them; and to those who possess a truthful knowledge of themselves there is no difficulty in understanding them. We give God what is due to Him—happy those who give Him all that is due to Him: but we give Him no profit, that is to say, nothing over and above what is due, therefore we are unprofitable. This is a simple plain truth, but, unfortunately, not enough considered; and for that reason do people spend their time, "labouring, — fasting, watching, praying, working — and take nothing," or very little. They think too much of what they are doing: they believe they have made great sacrifices, and deserve much from God in consequence. They spoil many of their works; their hearts are not the pleasant resting-place for Our Lord that He would have. "I seek a pure resting-place, and there is the place of My abode," a pure, simple, truthful heart. Mother! form it within us; or rather lend us thy heart, that Jesus may take His delight within it, within us.

Digitized by Google

FIFTH MEDITATION.

Having considered that if we do all that is commanded us we shall still be unprofitable servants, what must we now call ourselves? What are we who have not done all that is commanded us; who have broken the commands of a good and just God; who have dared, wretched creatures, to stand in the presence of our Creator and say: "I will not serve"? What are we? Sinners, we call ourselves, but that word does not express to our minds the utter degradation of our state; the vile things we have made ourselves, even if we have committed but one mortal sin. What figures can we use that will force more strongly on our minds what we have done, we who have committed sin? Soul! what have you done, who have broken the law of God? He, the Creator of your soul, loved it and drew it to Himself. He, the great God, united your soul to Himself in an ineffable union which we understand not, which it is impossible for us to realize; and your soul turned from its true spouse, its God, its Maker, its lover, and became

Digitized by Google

an adultress. That word will bring more home to you what you have become by sin. Turn not, then, from the unfortunate outcast in the streets with a shudder; but shudder for yourself when you consider what you have done, and what you have become, by your selfish sin. United with God in baptism, you grew up, and then forsook Him. United still closer in confirmation, you were unfaithful again, and forsook Him. United in the wonderful sacrament of love with Jesus,—your God, Incarnate that He might draw still nearer to you,—you approached and united yourself to Him, only to cast Him forth with contempt, and even loathing; and the soul that was in truth espoused to God, forsook its Lord and Master, and became an adultress. Think what a wife becomes, even in the eyes of a corrupt world, when she leaves her lawful husband and seeks other love besides her lawful love, and, finally rejected by all, becomes the wretched creature that the very passers by turn from as they encounter her in the streets. You, too, turn with disgust from such a miserable object; but this woman, so despicable to the eye of man, is but a picture, and

Digitized by Google

not nearly so horrible as your soul in the sight of God and His holy angels, when in a state of sin. There is nothing, there are no words that can be used strong enough to express what your soul becomes in a state of sin. Think of this with tears at the feet of Mary: she will stretch out her arms to you, and tell you not to be disheartened when you find what you have really done in committing sin. She will console you with the thought of the new birth for which you are preparing, when all the old things are to be put away. She will tell you that her special office is towards sinners. The greater the sinner, the more glory will there be to mercy, beloved attribute of God, when that sinner becomes a saint. For this reason may Mary have chosen you in preference to some soul that had never lost its baptismal innocence.

SIXTH MEDITATION.

In the last meditation we saw that a soul in a state of mortal sin is, in the eyes of God and His holy angels, worse than a woman who has lost her character in the eyes of the world. Now let us think that

Digitized by Google

with many of these sinners,—with whom, perhaps, we had never compared ourselves for a moment, however often we have said we are great sinners,—we cannot compare ourselves, because we really are so much worse. That woman whom you will not even notice, because she disgraced herself, had perhaps never been baptized; but you who were consecrated, and made the temple of the all pure, all holy God, have profaned His temple. You have committed sacrilege. I doubt if there is one Catholic out of ten who sufficiently considers this truth, of the greatness of his sins in comparison with the sins of others who have never received the sacraments and graces which he has received. We often read of fearful crimes which strike us with terror. We never, for an instant, compare our own sins with these crimes, and yet, perhaps, ours are worse, far worse, in the sight of God. Again, we may consider that God, who is the truth, sees not only what is, but likewise what would be, in all possible circumstances. Therefore He may see us, and know, by His divine wisdom, that in certain circumstances we should have committed the same, or may be, far worse

Digitized by Google

crimes. Think of this truth, and while you consider it, forget not to return thanks to the good providence of God, that so guarded you from evils and temptations which would have proved too strong for you. Whilst you are considering what you are in the sight of God, be sure and rejoice with Him in the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, the only one of His creatures of this world who ever appeared fair, and beautiful, and spotless in His sight; the only one of this earth whom He could, so to speak, trust never to fail Him in any circumstance.

SEVENTH MEDITATION.

In this last meditation upon the knowledge of ourselves, it will be well to consider the greatness of our dignity before the fall. We are so given to run to extremes, that the preceding meditations may have induced us to take too low a view of human nature. That is not my object at all. We were made a "little lower than the angels;" we are their younger brethren. We were created in Adam immaculate;

Digitized by Google

but above our pure nature, from the instant of our creation, was superadded a participation of the divine nature by grace. Besides, do we not possess a soul made to the likeness of the Blessed Trinity? And is not the body in which dwells this immortal soul,—though formed of clay—is it not fashioned to the likeness of the Son of Man? We must think upon this; we must think upon the greatness of our nature, to understand the depth of our fall. Let us, then, consider well these facts. 1st, We were created in Adam immaculate, and sinned, and in that one sin, which we cannot say we should not have committed had we been in Adam's place, were brought in all the crimes and outrages that are daily committed in this world. 2nd, That the nature made only a little lower than the angels, so that in truth we may be called their younger brethren, has been reduced to such a state, that in some respects it resembles the nature of devils. 3rd, That the sanctifying grace with which we were endowed, we have perhaps cast away, to feed on the husks of swine. 4th, That the likeness of the Ever Blessed Trinity has been blotted, blurred, dis-

Digitized by Google

figured in our soul. 5th, That the body, made to the likeness of the Son of Man, has been abused in how many ways? let each one's conscience tell. You may draw back from the comparison I feel inclined to make, and it is a thought we hardly like to think, far less write; but look upon that immaculate Virgin, bearing Jesus in her womb, then think what would be your grief if you were told that, even after the union of her body and soul with God, she would fall, she would rebel against her God, even as the rest of creatures had done. You would, if I may so express it, feel for God. You would exclaim, how grievous, how terrible! I would not hurt your feelings, for I know your love and reverence for your Mother Mary like not this comparison. I only make it to bring to your mind more forcibly the fearfulness of sin, and make you grieve in heart as you think with sorrow of God's beautiful creation of human nature, fresh and immaculate from the hand of its Creator, even united with Him by the wonderful union of sanctifying grace; and then sin, coming with its blasting power and nature, and human nature fallen and disgraced.

Digitized by Google

Think again of that other union with God, vouchsafed to Christians, by which the Holy Spirit takes up His abode in the soul, as in a temple dedicated to Him. Think of your first communion. Think how you prepared to receive Jesus, and promised to keep Him ever with you; and dwell upon the union then for the first time vouchsafed to you, a union by which Jesus comes and dwells in you as really as He did in Mary. Since at the time of communion you possess the Body and Soul, the Heart and the Blood of Jesus, think of the love that brought Him to your unworthy self; and then think how perhaps you cast Him forth, and sent Him from you, and consider if you have reason to do penance. Can pride ever again come to reign in you, or can anyone ever say anything too bad of you? Oh, no! that could not be possible. You now feel it in your inmost heart. You have come to the last day of the seven; you have devoted it to self-knowledge, and now you will commence with joy to strive, with God's grace, to know Mary better, His chosen one, and your own Mother. The knowledge you have acquired of the sinfulness of your

Digitized by Google

nature in its present state, will make you more grateful to God that that nature has been raised to so high a dignity in the person of Mary; and in the succeeding week, when we shall endeavour to know better our dear Lord, we shall be still more filled with wondering admiration at the marvellous condescension of God in assuming our nature to Himself.

Digitized by Google

ONE WEEK

TO BE DEVOTED TO MEDITATING AND HUMBLY IMPLORING GOD TO GRANT US THE

GRACE TO KNOW MARY BETTER.

This is a great matter we are about to attempt. We desire to penetrate into a hidden world of beauty, and to discover the wondrous charms of that world; to love it, to dwell in it with some of the joy with which God, in ineffable complacency, there reigns and displays His power and majesty. We seek to know Mary; we, who know ourselves to be the offscouring of creation, seek to know her whom even the angels do not know; seek to penetrate and discover God's secret, the secret He delights in, Mary. God alone knows Mary. Those who wish to know her better, then, must earnestly beg this grace, and, besides praying for it, should perform some penance, make a pilgrimage, or put themselves to some trouble to visit some

Digitized by Google

church dedicated to her honour. We must, besides, offer up some little acts of self-denial, denial of will, etc. We must use every means to induce God to look favourably upon us, and grant us our request. We will honour the holy angels, and ask their intercession. We will honour the saints, and beg their prayers. We will gain indulgences for the holy souls, and ask them likewise to plead; and when we have done all this, when we have offered Mass and Holy Communion for the special intention that God will reveal to us this secret He reserves to Himself,—the knowledge of the perfections of Mary—we will then tell God that, though we have thus sought this favour earnestly, as He desires we should seek to obtain a special favour from Him, yet we deserve not He should grant our request; but we will say: "Lord, look upon our unworthiness: show Thy mercy, Thy condescension to us. Cast into our minds a ray of light from Thy Holy Spirit, a thought from Thy own mind. Make us know Thee *in Mary*. Let Thy glory shine by stooping to speak to us, who prostrate ourselves before Thee in the very dust, acknowledging we are not wor-

Digitized by Google

thy to appear in Thy presence. Rejoice the Heart of Jesus for this Thy exceeding goodness, and incline towards us, making known Thy secret to us. 'Thou, O Lord, hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.' And for this did Jesus rejoice in Thy Holy Spirit. Yea, Lord, for so it hath seemed good in Thy sight. Say but the word: Let there be light: and, as in the beginning, where darkness now reigns, light will be. So be it. Amen, Amen."

Mother, we withdraw from the world to *think* of thee; but, sweet Mother, would it not be better to be *with* thee? We cannot come to thee. Come thou to us, draw us close to thy maternal heart, and make us feel its love. This will be the first thought in our minds concerning thee, that thou art, though a virgin, a Mother, and our Mother. We will pray to know all thy glories; but our first thought shall be that thou art our Mother, and that thou lovest us more, far more, than our own mothers ever have loved us, or ever will or could love us. It is not from selfishness that we think of Mary as our

Digitized by Google

Mother, before we think of her greatest and most glorious prerogative of being the Mother of God. We do this in order that we may love her better, that we may have a more close union with her, and thus be more pleasing to her.

Mary is our Mother for three reasons. Firstly, because, being Mother of Jesus, by a certain necessity she must be the Mother of those who are His members. Secondly, because, on Calvary, where we may say all who are baptised were born, (Calvary is the birth-place of the Christian,) Mary co-operated in a great degree in that new birth, by uniting with Jesus in offering the Precious Blood by which we are all regenerated, in other words, receive a new birth. Thirdly, Jesus Himself proclaimed her our Mother from the cross. We shall consider the two last claims of Mary to the title of our Mother in a separate meditation; now we will consider Mary as the sweet Mother, bearing Jesus in her womb, and therefore bearing His elect: for, as we have shown at length in the "Path of Mary," Mary, as Mother of our Head Jesus, must likewise be Mother of all the members of the

Digitized by Google

mystic body. Yes, we, who hope to rest for ever with our Lord in heaven, were with Him as He lay, so tranquil, so peaceful, within Mary after the Annunciation; and Mary knew this. She knew that the glorious triumphant Church, that for all eternity would be the delight of the Eternal Father in heaven, the Spouse of the Eternal Word, in which the Holy Spirit would dwell as its very soul, lay hidden with Jesus in her womb. The science God had given her (without a special inspiration) would show her that, in being Mother of Jesus, she became Mother of all His elect.

Therefore, hide yourself with Jesus in Mary, asking Him to give you some little of His own knowledge of the perfections of His Mother; draw near to the Heart of the Infant Jesus, and rest with Him in Mary. If you are one of His you were with Him there, loved there, prayed for there. Unite yourself to Jesus, join your heart to His, and offering our Blessed Lady your intention to belong wholly to her, as did Jesus, beg that His Sacred Heart may supply the little love you have hitherto shown Mary. Turn to her now, and call

Digitized by Google

upon her by the name she so loves, the sweet name of Mother.

FIRST MEDITATION.

Put before your mind eternity. Think of the Three Ever Blessed Persons of the Holy and Undivided Trinity. Think of the ineffable complacency with which the All-Holy *brooded* over a work which then existed but in His own mind. What work was it? What creation produced, so to speak, this unspeakable joy in God? It was Mary, the Immaculate Virgin Mother. How did Mary give such pleasure to the Most High? By these three glorious prerogatives: she was ever Immaculate; she was a Virgin; she was a Mother. This last is her crowning title. Mary ever appears before God as the perfect exemplar of His own divine idea of mother. Thus I would have you place her before your own mind, before we take separately her several titles. We shall have to do that, for Mary is so great that we must do as we do with God, when we consider His various attributes separately; so with Mary, we

Digitized by Google

must look on her principal prerogatives separately. But we must first look upon her, as well as our poor little finite minds will permit, as she appeared before the Infinite Mind of God from all eternity. Firstly, then, Mary stood alone. There was nothing like her. She was a beautiful world to God. She was a wonderful attraction to Him. The Eternal Father looked with unspeakable delight upon His beloved daughter. The Holy Spirit claimed her as His spouse. The Word uttered in eternity the word He loved to speak in time, the sweet word "Mother." God created the angels before He created Mary, but they saw in Him the wondrous being He would create, and exclaimed in wonder: "Quæ est ista?" "Who is this?" "Thou art all fair, O My love, and there is no spot in thee," said her Creator to Mary when He brought her forth into the world.

Thus must we think of her as we look upon Mary Immaculate. She is all fair; there is no spot in her. Our sin-stained minds fail to understand a purity which seems a very reflection of the purity of the Blessed Trinity itself. We love Mary's virginity; but we rest not in that pre-

Digitized by Google

rogative, but add to it a Virgin Mother. The thought of Mary as the one perfect Mother, crowns all others, and makes her so very very dear to our hearts. How dear we may imagine by this thought, and it may be well to put it before you that you may cherish her more: suppose there were no Mary; suppose we had to think of God without Mary; that in the mind of God there had never been this beautiful conception, a Virgin Mother; that in this world of ours there had never been *one* pure being, a sweet immaculate virgin, who alone of all creatures fulfilled perfectly her Creator's will, the will which, from all eternity, had made her "Mother." Those who ever rest on Mary's bosom; those who dwell in her arms, and feel her mother-love poured upon them, as she, as it were, feeds them with her milk, will tell you they never love God more than when they love Him *in Mary;* and that the sweetest word to them after Jesus, Saviour, is Mary, Mother. Dwell upon these few thoughts. Think of Mary as she ever appeared in the mind of God, spotless, a Virgin, a Mother.

Digitized by Google

SECOND MEDITATION.

If you had not considered and wept over sin, in the first week's preparation for entering the path of Mary, you would not be able to rejoice, as I would have you, in the stainlessness, the Immaculate Conception of Mary. But you have considered it; you have burned with indignation against yourself. You have loathed your own self with a holy hatred; and you have been right to do so. Does not your very presence as a sinful creature offer — if mercy had not condoned your guilt—injury to an all-holy God? Are you not grieved at the universal desecration in God's beautiful creation? Assuredly yes; so grieved that you turn away from the contemplation of sin and iniquity: you look to Mary. How can we speak of the purity of Mary? To what can we liken it? It seems to us, as I said in the preceding meditation, as though the purity of Mary were a reflection of the purity of the Ever Blessed Trinity itself. We best understand Mary when we look at her in this light, as reflecting God. It is difficult to think of

Digitized by Google

Mary without looking at her in this light. Try to look at Mary by herself, so to speak: you cannot succeed. You can but turn to your Mother and rest in her arms as a little child does in those of its mother. Confess you do not understand her; you hardly care to try to do so, any more than a child does its mother. When you have attained your maturity, which will not be till you are received into heaven, then you will *better* understand Mary. God alone will ever fully understand her. In the meantime you are happy with her. You feel that whilst you are with Mary, you are in a part of God's creation where He reigns supreme. You rejoice, then, in Mary's purity, and in her Immaculate Conception, with a joy you cannot understand; but it is because it is something so like God Himself. Now we know that Mary's nature, the same as our nature, is distinct from God. God, indeed, is present to all things, but likewise distinct. Mary's nature, however, was so pure, that it was absorbed with God's; God dwelt in Mary. She reflected Him without a spot, or mar, or wrinkle. We break down in the attempt to think of this marvellous purity.

Digitized by Google

Think how this purity united God to Mary, even before the Incarnation, and you will understand the words of a holy man: "that it was almost a necessity for God to be Incarnate in her." Visible things represent to us deep truths. I will place a similitude before you. If you procure two plates of metal, both *exactly similar*, and put them together, though of different metals, if they are perfectly smooth and free from discrepancy of any kind, they will be so closely united together that it will be in vain to attempt to separate them; rivets would not unite them so firmly. There is much to be thought of in this, even as an emblem of our own ultimate union with God, and the perfection, that is to say, the conformity of will He expects from us, if we would be united with Him. Sin is an opposition of our will to God. Mary, who, at the instant of her conception was gifted with understanding, used that understanding to conform her will to that of God. As she sprang into existence, her soul bowed down in lowliest adoration, with the perfect offering of its every power and faculty: memory, understanding, and will, were

Digitized by Google

offered so entirely to God. Mary's spirit so entirely joined His spirit, that it was a sort of necessity to God to become Incarnate in her; that, as He could not raise her human nature to the level of His divine nature, He must Himself take her human nature, that He might be more closely united to His chosen one. Reflect here on your own happiness in being allowed to unite yourself to Mary, to give yourself to her as Jesus did. Thank Him that His Holy Spirit has enlightened you, and put this mind in you, which was also in Jesus Christ, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it was not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave." You, likewise, in imitation of Him, are preparing to empty yourself and take the form of a slave. In imitation of God, you have resolved to become a little child. He, when He became an infant, was at the same time King of kings. You, who read, may be king or queen; you may hold a high position in God's Church, you may be bishop, cardinal, or even the Holy Father himself: the higher your position, the more will your oblation resemble that of our

Digitized by Google

Lord, as He put Himself into Mary's hands, and depended entirely upon her. God did not change when He became Man in Mary's womb. Neither will you change your outward position, as do religious, when they make an irrevocable offering of themselves, and dedicate themselves to God's service. No, you will lead, if I may so express it, two lives: outwardly to the world you will perform the duties of whatever position God has placed you in; but in your spiritual life you will be ever a child, united with Jesus to Mary, carried at her breast, "ad ubera portabimini." Look forward to the day that is to unite you thus to Mary.

THIRD MEDITATION.

ON THE SIMPLICITY OF MARY.

Mary's life was marvellous, but most marvellous in its simplicity. In the temple an angel might have visited her; and the Lord of the temple might have been born in the temple, and her life and His have been a series of wonders. It might

Digitized by Google

have been thus marvellous, but not simple. Consider the grand work that has been done to the holy Virgin. Is she elated, or even excited? No, Mary mirrors faithfully as ever her God, in whom there can be no such thing as surprise, elation or excitement. She is as simple as ever. No duty is left undone; her household duties are performed as carefully as ever. Looking at her, a stranger would say she was beautiful; they would remark the purity and sweetness of expression in her young virgin face, and the dignity there was in her manner, even in performing the simplest actions. But how much more beautiful did Mary appear to one who was not a stranger, the dear St. Joseph? He, to whom had been revealed the grand mystery of the Incarnation, watched with reverence, and ever increasing love, God's chosen one, and beheld, day by day, growing upon her face, the sweet maternal look of a mother, intermixing with, and heightening, its fresh virginal beauty. St. Joseph was simple himself, but Mary's simplicity was a surprise to him. Unless he had been assured by the angel, he could not have imagined so great a mystery had taken place in the

Digitized by Google

young Virgin confided to him, so great an honour conferred upon her. She had remained the same; her manner had not changed. She had no extasies: there was nothing wonderful about her but her wonderful purity and simplicity. She had become Mother of God with the simplicity of God Himself. God works His greatest works as quietly and unostentatiously as He does His smaller ones; and the child of His heart, the immaculate Virgin Mary, closely imitated Him. Quietly she went about her daily work in the poor cottage of a mechanic—very different works they were to what she performed in the temple—though she bore within her the Author of life. Truly did she portray her God. He, whilst He is performing the grand work of creating immortal souls, is listening attentively to a child's prayer; is providing for the least want in animate and inanimate creation; and is at the same time wholly intent upon His own glorious life, the Generation of His Eternal Word, the Procession of the Holy Spirit, whilst thus simply working. Behold Mary now the created exemplar of divine excellence, and bless God a thousand times for His

Digitized by Google

goodness to her. God is indeed wonderful in His saints, but most wonderful and loveable in the queen of saints, the mother of saints, in Mary. If Mary had, in that supreme time of her life, when so great a change had been worked in her, likewise altered her mode of life, and not acted as simply as she did, as though nothing extraordinary had happened to her, she would not have been the perfect being she is; she would not have pleased God so greatly, and she would not have appeared so loveable to us,—sin-stained that we are, and therefore incapable of appreciating her as we might if we were not so stained—as the simple yet grand mother, whom nothing could change, in whom God's unchangeableness was seated, and who, therefore, reflected this divine attribute as faithfully as others. Mother, we love thee! so sweet, so simple. Bestow upon thine own this grace, this great great gift. Clothe them with thy simplicity, and with thy other graces, and present them thus to Jesus. His spouses He will choose from those confided to thee, and whom He loves so, for they are clothed with thy simplicity. We entreat this grace, dear Mother,

Digitized by Google

for many, who, striving to serve Jesus, have not found thy sweet way. Make it known to them, saints of God, we pray you. Holy angels, lead your children to the path of Mary, that they may thus find Jesus, where He is ever to be found, in the company of Mary.

I feel inclined to digress here a little. I have known those who made religion a romance rather than a reality; who did not sufficiently understand of what true spirituality consists. They were not sinfully wrong, but they were not serving God as they might, from want of simplicity; and they likewise made themselves uncomfortable, and others too. They did not know how to unite the body and soul; they would like to have been all soul. The wants of the body made them uncomfortable, and were a great eye-sore to them. God made your body, you who are rather romantic than truly religious. You mean well, but you err. Religion is a reasonable service. Go to Mary, throw yourself in her arms as an infant at the breast, and beg her to make you simple. Remember Mary had a body and soul: remember how she delighted to use her

Digitized by Google

body in the service of God, and the joy with which, in no spiritual manner, but really and substantially, she fed Jesus with her pure milk, and rejoiced in this maternal office. Happy indeed are all good mothers, as they feed their little ones at the breast: but how far more happy was Mary! The martyrs shed their blood for Jesus, but Mary fed and nourished Him with hers; since the milk with which she fed Jesus, was, as with other mothers, the blood of her heart changed into milk. Ah, Mary was indeed happy; with her blood she fed Jesus, who shed His precious blood for her and for us all.

EXTRACT FROM THE "DIVINE SEQUENCE."

"We are all and each of us so impregnated with evil; we are so saturated with our own sins, and the sins of those about us, that we fail to realize the sublime and exquisite beauty of daily life, with its round of ordinary occupations, as lived and performed by a perfectly holy being. We have woven our passions into every act and every thought; we wake with their hot breath on our lips; we break bread

Digitized by Google

with our sin-soiled hands; we hew wood and draw water in the covetousness of our nature: and the exquisite, tender, and pathetic beauty of *ordinary daily life* escapes our perception. If we would learn to see it, we must study Mary. He who did not abhor the Virgin's womb will make the scales fall from our eyes, if we set ourselves quietly and deliberately to contemplate her whom He chose to be His Mother. The dignity of life, which we are apt to miss in our graceless scuffle with ourselves and with others, will gradually dawn upon us. And that, not as life in the wilderness; not on the top of a pillar, nor yet in its glorious but exceptional phases, as an apostle, as a martyr, or even as a confessor; but life in its most simple elements, its least striking developments, its least dazzling surroundings. Life, in short, as Mary lived it; and as Jesus chose and fashioned it for His Mother, and thus fashioning it for her who is the culminating point of creation, He has sanctified life in the aspect that it offers to the multitude. He has made all things pure to those who live in purity. He has hidden Himself behind the simplest accidents of life. "He stand-

Digitized by Google

eth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices." He has left a blessing on our daily path, like the perfume of hidden violets by the side of the dusty road. Where we seek Him, there we shall find Him; for He is not far from every one of us, and He has given us His own pure and Virgin Mother to go hand in hand with us through the routine of existence. It all resumes itself in this; that simplicity and secrecy are strength, while multiplicity and multifariousness are a loss of power, as they are a loss of dignity. When God reveals Himself to man, He hides Himself in the bosom of a virgin. When He would show us a perfect human being, He places her in an obscure village, and to men's eyes she betrays nothing extraordinary. All beginnings of great things are little. All beginnings of good things are simple. Nothing really great ever began by assuming a great name, or proclaiming its commencement with a flourish of trumpets. The largest rivers flow from the most hidden springs. We are still searching for the sources of the Nile.* God's ways are the

* Written previously to the late discovery.

Digitized by Google

same always and everywhere. And they are a constant and silent protest against the bustling vainglory of men, against the hurry and scramble of our mode of life, our ill-tempered eagerness and indiscriminate hurry. A large, deep drawn, wide, embracing hopefulness, and a steady uninterrupted but unhasteful effort, will alone convert nations and peoples, diminish the reign of evil, and translate into action our daily and hourly prayer: 'May Thy kingdom come.'"

THIRD MEDITATION.

THE PEACE OF MARY.

How we all desire peace, precious peace, the peace of God. Is it to be found anywhere but in God in heaven? Yes, it was found in the heart of Mary, even on earth, even on Calvary. God appears to us, when we with our limited minds look upon our illimitable God, as a vast ocean of indescribable peace. Mary appears as a fair fountain, receiving from this vast ocean. The word "fountain" applies well to Mary. She arises as a fair fountain, re-

Digitized by Google

ceiving from the ocean of God's infinite perfections, which she retains not within herself, but pours out upon others. "Fount of love," the Church sings of thee, Mary; and truly, for from the vast ocean of uncreated love thou didst receive Love Incarnate, Jesus, our life, our love; and throughout the world, sweet Mother, hast thou poured forth thy treasure of love, thy stream of life, the Body and Blood of Jesus, ever present with us in the Blessed Sacrament.

Theologians tell us that God dispenses all His gifts through Mary. It is wonderful that any one should doubt it. It falls so in harmony with all His conduct to us: He gave His only Son to us through Mary. How has He not with Him given us all things? When our Lord was born into the world, we are told in the hymn of the angels two effects of His advent: "Glory to God on high, and peace on earth to men of good will." Through Mary came this peace; through Mary shall we obtain this priceless gift for ourselves. Mary, even on earth, was flooded with a peace that nothing could disturb, not even the crucifixion and death of Jesus. This

Digitized by Google

is what Mary's own find in the presence of their Mother, an unutterable, tranquil, all-pervading peace. A wondrous gift, which all may well desire to possess. Mary's own will possess it; not in a moment, nor upon their immediate entrance into the path of Mary will they possess this peace to the full extent; but the day will come, and it may be after some great trial, borne bravely, it may be after some terrible crucifixion of soul, that Mary will breathe into the soul of her child "that peace which the world cannot give," that it cannot even understand, "the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding;" the peace which Mary ever possessed, which was co-eval in her soul with its existence, and never dislodged. Mother of peace! pray that thy children may obtain this gift. Full well we know Mary is anxious we should possess it. Earnestly would she pray that we may obtain it; but she knows there is a law laid down by God, that, to obtain favours, we must ask for them ourselves; and likewise, in our present fallen state, we are bound to labour for what otherwise we might have obtained without an effort. We must think of this

Digitized by Google

seriously, and resolve to be in earnest, to put ourselves to some trouble, to remember that "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away." If we are to commence on earth to enjoy the peace of heaven, as Mary did, we must expect to earn it only by great fidelity to grace. Practise the devotion to Our Lady recommended to you in the path of Mary, as the devotion of so many great saints. Rest assured, if you faithfully follow the "path of Mary," you will arrive at that stage of your spiritual life where, singularly settled in hope, the God of peace will dwell in you with a special love of predilection, giving you on earth a foretaste of the joy you will possess, when in heaven He imprints upon you His everlasting kiss of peace.

FOURTH MEDITATION.

THE HEART OF MARY.

To understand Mary, as we are now seeking to do, we must ask her to open her heart to us, that we may enter therein and discover its workings. What do we

Digitized by Google

find in the virgin heart of Mary? The answer must be weighed. We find it possessed, in a finite way, of God's infinite perfections. There is an axiom laid down "that we cannot give to another what we do not possess ourselves." — This is a thought well worthy the consideration of parents, and those who have the charge of the souls of others.—To apply this axiom to our Lady: to bring forth God Mary must possess God. Mary possessed the Holy Spirit. He was absolute Lord and Master of her heart. He formed it to His own desire; and the very blood of the heart of Mary was instinct with the very instincts of the Precious Blood, that, at the time of the Incarnation, was formed from it. Yes, of the sinless blood of Mary were formed the first drops of the Precious Blood that redeemed us. Thus, to look at Mary as the fountain of the Precious Blood will increase our devotion to her.* Again, we find in the heart of Mary, as I have said, in a finite way, God's infinite perfections. Thus, the infinite love of

* See Father Faber's beautiful work on the Precious Blood.

Digitized by Google

God for His creatures was possessed in its degree by Mary; His mercy, His wisdom, and so on, through attribute after attribute, if we except His justice; as the dear St. Liguori tells us, *that* seems shut out from her. To explain this: God seems so to love the laws He has laid down, that He derogates not from them without, so to speak, necessity. He works miracles by means of His saints, it is true, but where the natural means can be adapted He uses them. We see Him instructing His prophet in the use of the plaster of figs, preferring to do so than to cure him by a miracle. We see our dear Lord Himself, as He raised the young girl to life, ordering food to be given her, this being the natural means to obtain strength. It is also quite commonly the case that when people have been miraculously cured they have a ravenous desire for food, evidently God wishing them to adopt the usual means of gaining strength. Why have I dwelt upon this but to show that, as in the natural order, the thoughts, ideas, impressions, etc., of the mother, are transmitted to her unborn child,—and this, in an unfallen state, might have been greater than at

Digitized by Google

present*—so our Lord, coming into this world a little infant, and showing, too, how great was His desire to be as other infants, would take from His mother what other children take from their mothers; that is to say, He would wish the same influence exercised upon Himself whilst unborn that is exercised upon other unborn children by their mothers? Think of this, and turn to your Mother. Look upon Mary, and see whether she does not seem greater to you? Our minds are dazzled by the thought that God could trust His only Son to her; that our Lord could submit to be influenced by her, and that her thoughts, her ideas, were all, not only so pure, so beautiful, but even God-like breathings of His Holy Spirit, that they were in perfect harmony with the Will of the Eternal Father for the Sacred Humanity of His Eternal Word. Mary was, as other mothers, but a medium for the transmission of the soul of her Son. She

* The analogy of creation would lead to the inference that the influence of a mother over her child, and that child's resemblance to its mother, would have been far greater in an unfallen state than it is at present.

Digitized by Google

did not create it. But look at other mothers, and think how they mar the beautiful soul God creates so perfect, and then think of Mary. Turn to her with your heart burning with love for that pure being who alone of all God's creatures of this world never failed Him. The man who received the grand praise that he was after God's own heart could fall, and fall grievously, in this sad, sad world of ours. But our own Mother Mary,—though of the same sinful race—has raised up that sinful race from the stigma that there was not one, of all the millions of human beings who have lived upon this earth, and upon whom a good God poured out His love, that had served God as He desired, as He deserved to be served for that infinite creating love. Rest now in the maternal heart of Mary, that you may not lose the thoughts you have received from this meditation. The enemy of souls will strive to deprive you of them, but he has not entrance into the sweet tabernacle of the heart of Mary. What that heart loves your own should love. What that heart desires your own should desire. Love God in union with the heart of Mary.

Digitized by Google

Love His saints; love the holy angels; love the suffering souls; love all upon this earth, and seek to do good to all. If you are very close to the mother-heart of Mary, you will especially devote yourself to succouring the dying, knowing the maternal anxiety of Mary lest they should be lost for ever. All that you think, all that you do, should be done in union with the heart of Mary.

FIFTH MEDITATION.

The thought of Mary's greatness almost bewilders our mind. We cannot fathom it; but the thought of Mary as our mother is easier understood. The thought of Mary simply as a mother, is a quiet, peaceful thought. It is well to think of Mary's greatness; but it is better to draw close to her, to throw yourself into her arms, as a little child, with the secure feeling of trust and happiness possessed by little infants at their mother's breast. Mary wants our love, and we love her best by being in her presence, by being with her thus, than by lofty meditations upon her glories. The greatest glory and joy

Digitized by Google

to Mary, is, that she is immaculate and a mother; *that* is our joy likewise, as we live in her company, as those who enter the "path of Mary" will do. The Precious Blood of Jesus flowed in her veins, and hence she had a mother's right over it. She willingly offered it that children might be born to her. Children of Jesus and Mary, you should love to be on Calvary. It is your birth-place. Your new life of grace, your regeneration, is owing to the Blood Jesus shed for you on Calvary; and secondarily, to the sorrowing maternal heart of Mary, who earned by her sufferings that numbers who might have been lost should be saved; for the all-powerful prayer of one who was immaculate had a wondrous power of impetration. "It is the prayer of the pure heart pierces the clouds." Again was there power in Mary's prayer, in that she was a virgin; again that she prayed from a suffering heart, which a holy writer* tells us has marvellous efficacy with God. Again, it was the prayer of a mother's heart. Think of the love Jesus bore the heart

* Father Faber, "Foot of the Cross."

Digitized by Google

of His Mother. Consider if He could resist its prayer; at that time, too, when it was suffering so grievously for Him and His. We who are about to belong to her, as her very own, may indeed consider, as I have written elsewhere,* that, but for the extra graces earned for us by our Mother, we might have lost our souls entirely. That this is no exaggeration, we may infer from the fact, that our Lady would naturally plead for those for whom there was least hope. A saint heard, by means of revelation, that God, asking Mary to name her request that He might grant it, the answer of Mary was: "I ask mercy for the miserable." We may well believe, then, that our Lord, desiring to honour and give pleasure to His Mother, and reward her patient suffering,—suffering not needed, since His own sufficed for all—knowing likewise that no present, no gift, would be so acceptable to her maternal heart as children, should tell her to choose from His people some who should be her very own; and that Mary's compassionate heart chose, from amongst the innumerable

* "Path of Mary."

Digitized by Google

human beings who people this earth, those who are most miserable, most in danger of the eternal loss of their souls. In one part of the Church Mary is known as the "Divine Shepherdess." Those who belong to Mary's flock may love to give their Mother this title too. Thirdly, Mary was proclaimed most solemnly our Mother by the dying breath of Jesus: "Son, behold thy Mother; Woman, behold thy son." Thus did Jesus commend His Church to St. John, who, on Calvary, represented the Church, he being the sole apostle present. Jesus commended to Mary His Church, His last solemn act towards us ere He died. It was His dying gift to Mary. It was, after herself, what was most precious to Him of all creation. In giving Mary to us, to be not only a guardian and a patroness, but a Mother, Jesus gave us a proof of love, of which none was greater except when He gave us His own self in the Blessed Sacrament, and when He poured out His Precious Blood to the last drop for us upon the cross. Let us, then, take Mary as our very own, and the gentle eyes of Jesus will be turned upon us with exceeding love, as He sees us prize what is above all price,

Digitized by Google

His own Immaculate Mother; above all price, for the immaculate purity of Mary was purchased at the infinite price of His own most Precious Blood; as He sees we love what He, the God-Man, loves with such an intense love, His perfect Mother. We must enter into the Heart of Jesus on the cross if we would learn His love for Mary—His love for us.

SIXTH MEDITATION.

THE MATERNITY OF MARY.

Consider, firstly, that, to gain some idea of the maternity of Mary, both as regards Jesus and ourselves, we must raise our thoughts to the Eternal Father, of whom all paternity is named. It was the knowledge of Himself, that, from all eternity, generated God's Word, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Son of God, born of the Father from all eternity, the figure of His substance. If I may so express it,—for it is very difficult to speak of God in proper terms,—the very thoughts, feelings, powers of the Father, His very self, or rather His contemplation of His

Digitized by Google

own nature, engendered within Himself from all eternity His only begotten Son. Contemplating thus with the lowly reverence we must ever have, as we think upon the adorable mysteries of God, the Eternal Father, generating His Eternal Word, God's very thought of Himself constituting another divine Person, we gain some thought of the divine maternity of Mary. To resemble God is all perfection. We are all made to give glory to God, by reflecting His infinite perfections. "The heavens show forth the glory of God;" so must the earth also, and its inhabitants. "Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect;" are the words of Incarnate Truth. No one but Mary has kept this word. God looks upon Mary, and sees His own divine perfections reflected faithfully in her. God the Father looked from His high throne upon the Lily of Jerusalem, Mary, ever Virgin. His own purity was reflected in her; and He resolved still more should His chosen one resemble Him, and as no other of His creatures should, for, though a mother, she should remain a Virgin. She should imitate Him still more; she should be the Mother of

Digitized by Google

His Son. Well might the angels wonder and exclaim in surprise: "Quæ est ista?" when they viewed in God this wondrous conception; a creature of God, a woman, one so resembling the Eternal Father, that He, "who from all eternity had rested in unruffled repose in the bosom of His Eternal Father," born of Him for ever and ever, they saw lying in "peaceful repose in the womb of Mary," born in time of this Immaculate Virgin to remain her Son for all eternity; the eternal Word become incarnate, conceived by eternal love, the Holy Spirit of God. Well might the holy angels, the sons of God, make joyful melody at creation's dawn, as they looked upon Jesus, the first-born of all creatures, as they saw Mary, Virgin and Mother. Ah! that we had the pure mind of angels, that we might understand this adorable mystery with some little of their intelligence.

Digitized by Google

SEVENTH MEDITATION.

MARY OUR QUEEN.

It is ignorance makes us think such unworthy thoughts of Mary's greatness. As Mother of the Lord of all creation, the King of angels, she is their Queen. As Mother of Him who made Himself our Brother, she is our Mother. The God of wisdom arranges all things in exquisite order. Ah! happy are those who follow His wondrous ways, and see the marvellous order with which He has arranged all things. He who arranged inanimate creation with such exquisite order, who knit together all the parts of the universe, has done all things in wisdom. We have thought of Mary as a Virgin, as a Mother, —Mother of God, Mother of men. In heaven Mary is still Mother of the Incarnate Word, the King of angels. The Lord of Hosts, and the God who has fitted each part of this material earth on which we live, with such exactitude of preparation, with such nicety, has likewise ordered His creation in heaven with the same love

Digitized by Google

of order. It was fitting that Mary should be Queen of Heaven, as God has made her. It followed from God's previous conduct in her regard. The angels admire this conduct of God. They look upon their Queen, and love her with all the strength with which those mighty spirits of love can love. They love Mary with a love of which we have not the slightest knowledge, because we know not what angelic love is like. The angels, creations of divine love, seem more like emanations of divine love created. They have not the slightest alloy; they have no self-love. They love with a purity which we cannot imagine; and, therefore, as the angels praise their Queen, the love with which they sing their eternal hymn to her, "Sancta, sancta, sancta, Maria Dei genitrix et Virgo," is above our comprehension. Let us, however, join their ranks, and salute our Mother as Queen of Angels; and learn how God exalts those whom He designs to honour; those who correspond to His design in their regard. Notice this: Mary is exalted for her correspondence to the graces God lavished upon her. We, with the woman in the Gospel, proclaim Mary

Digitized by Google

blessed, because her womb bore the Son of God; because her breasts suckled Him. But our Lord's answer should sink into our hearts: "Yea, rather; blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it." But still more blessed because she did the will of God, she fulfilled His word.

We have now finished the week we devoted to endeavouring to know God's secret —Mary. We have endeavoured to look upon her as she appeared in the mind of God from all eternity. We have glanced at her beautiful, womanly, motherly life on earth. We have raised our thoughts to heaven, where she has her glorious throne, surrounded by angels who incessantly sing her praise; and yet we are obliged to confess that we do not know her; that she still seems unknown to us. What, then, must we do? Turn to her, I again repeat, as your own Mother Mary; rest on her breast; trust to her love. Be as a little infant, content that you are in a safe place, when you are in the arms of Mary. The little child understands not

Digitized by Google

the mother it trusts so entirely, with whom it is so happy. If we belong wholly to Mary, we may be sure that, great as her love is for all God's people, those who are entirely trusted to her motherly care are most loved and taken care of by her. We know this from our own experience. Priests and superiors will tell of the love God puts into their hearts for their spiritual children. Be not disturbed that you, even now, do not understand Mary as you think you ought. Trust in her love more and more every day. Make your home in her bosom. Throw yourself into her arms, as the little unthinking child, who does not know aught of its mother except that she is its mother, and loves it more than any one else does, and will therefore take greater care of it. The child knows not why its mother loves it so greatly. It knows only the fact. We understand not why our Mother Mary loves us so much; but nevertheless let us believe that, "as greater love than this no man hath, than that he lay down his life for his friend;" so greater love no mother ever had, or could have, than Mary, who laid upon the cross Him who was her life, Him to whom she

Digitized by Google

had given life,—Jesus,—to die a bloody death for us, unworthy children of earth, children of Mary. We exaggerate not, when we say Mary offered Jesus for us. Those who judge of God's ways by the harmony there is in all He does, may well believe that He, who was not born without her consent, died not without it. Mothers will tell you that the child for whom they have most suffered in giving it birth, is the one they love best. Measure Mary's love by her sufferings. You understand her dolours are above your comprehension. In the same proportion as Mary suffered does she love those for whom she suffered. May that sweet suffering Mother draw you closer to her maternal heart, so that your own heart may beat in unison with it, as did the Heart of Jesus as He lay an infant in the womb of Mary; and the very beatings of that Mother-heart were as sweetest music to Him; and the united Hearts of Jesus and Mary offered worship, even on this sinful earth, such as the Blessed Trinity never had received from cherubim or seraphim, even in heaven. May you, uniting your worship to the

Digitized by Google

adoration and praise offered unitedly by Jesus and Mary, praise the good good God whom you love, where He—if we may so speak—so loves Himself, in Mary.

Digitized by Google

THIRD WEEK,

TO BE DEVOTED TO

ENDEAVOURING TO KNOW OUR DEAR LORD BETTER.

"And this is eternal life; to know Thee, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

PREPARATORY CONSIDERATION.

"Who art Thou, Lord?" was the question put by the glorious apostle of the Gentiles; and the answer given him was one that might be given each one of us: "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." That should be our first thought as we seek to know our Lord better than we ever knew Him before. "He is the sign that should be contradicted; the stone that the builders rejected." It is we who have contradicted Him, who have many

Digitized by Google

times in our lives completely rejected Him, and put Him from us. *But He has borne with us.* This must be ever our thought, as we seek to know our Lord. Patience, gentleness, pervading every action, unruffled by the greatest insults. Not patient and gentle because He did not feel those insults. Not serenely indifferent to them. No, but feeling bitterly in His inmost Heart every gross neglect and outrage that those He so loved inflicted on Him, and yet patient. Jesus, before we dare venture to ask Thee to open Thy Sacred Heart and reveal its love, its beauties, to us, we will kneel and make reparation to It for the many times we have grieved and wounded it. Forgive, dear Jesus, forgive, whilst we tell Thee with Thy saints that* "Thou art Christ, my Father, my tender God, my great King, my Good Shepherd, my one Master, my best Helper, my most beautiful and my Beloved, my Living Bread, my Priest for ever, my Leader to my country, my True Light, my holy Sweetness, my straight Way, my excellent Wisdom, my pure Simpli-

* Prayer of S. Augustine.

Digitized by Google

city, my pacific Harmony, my whole Guard, my good Portion, my everlasting Salvation. Christ Jesus, sweet Lord, why have I ever loved; why in my whole life have I ever desired any thing except Thee, Jesus my God? Where was I when I was not in Thy mind with Thee? Now, from this time forth, do ye all my desires grow hot, and flow out upon the Lord Jesus. Run, ye have been tardy so far; hasten whither ye are going; seek whom ye are seeking. O Jesus! may he who loves Thee not be anathema: may he who loves Thee not be filled with bitterness! O sweet Jesus, may every good feeling that is fitted for Thy praise, love Thee, delight in Thee, admire Thee, God of my heart and my portion. Christ Jesus, may my heart faint away in spirit, and mayest Thou be my life within me. May the live coal of Thy love grow hot within my spirit, and break forth into a perfect fire; may it burn incessantly on the altar of my heart; may it glow in my innermost being; may it blaze in hidden recesses of my soul; and in the day of my consummation, may I be found consummated with Thee. Amen."

Digitized by Google

We seek to know Thee, Jesus, Son of God! Ah! would that the answer came as it did to the man born blind, who, when our Lord asked him: "Did he believe in the Son of God?" replied: "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" The sweet voice of Jesus answered: "I am He who *speaketh* with thee." May Jesus speak to each one of you who now seeks to know Him. Indeed we know Him not until He does speak to us: "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Let us constantly repeat this to ourselves during this week; and mayhap, if we seek Him earnestly, He will draw near to us: and looking back to this time which we devoted to Him, we shall exclaim: "Did not our hearts burn within us as He spoke with us in the way?"

Communion with Jesus, union with Him, is the one great means of knowing our Blessed Lord. We will therefore communicate with this intention, at least once oftener if allowed. We will make spiritual communions constantly. We will withdraw our minds as much as possible from all distracting thoughts; and in our prayers, that they may be more recollected

Digitized by Google

than hitherto, we will place ourselves close to the heart of Mary, and there seek Jesus, and visit Him as we visit the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. We will follow the example of a holy man, who used, after Holy Communion, and before leaving the church, to place our Lord in the heart of His Mother, and then, though unable, through the employments of the day, to visit the Blessed Sacrament, he would spiritually visit and communicate by going to the heart of Mary.

FIRST MEDITATION.

Jesus is beautiful and loveable everywhere. Some love Him better in one phase of life than in another. Place yourself, then, where your devotion leads you for this first meditation. With Jesus in the arms of Mary, or with Jesus in His Manhood, together with Mary and Joseph, or at the last supper; and if you are one of His most favoured ones, remain on the cross where His love has drawn you to Himself. Who is Jesus? The beginning and end of all created things. God made

Digitized by Google

visible the invisible attributes of the Eternal, shown in the visible acts of the Word Incarnate in time. The Second Person of the ever Blessed Trinity, the Only Son of God, Born of the Father from all eternity, became Incarnate, born of Mary in time. Thus Jesus possesses two natures, though He is but one Person; the human nature exactly the same as ours, of a body and soul. This body and soul were directly assumed by the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity at the instant of their formation in Mary's womb; so that though in Jesus there are two natures, there is but one Person, the Person of the Son of God. As the Eternal Word, by whom all things that are were made, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity loved us as God alone can love. As the Incarnate Word, possessing our human nature together with His own divine nature, He loved as a God-Man alone could love. We understand not divine love. It is far above our comprehension. We see the various forms of human love. We feel them. Let us consider them, for they are all possessed by Jesus. In assuming human nature, Jesus united Himself in-

Digitized by Google

separably to us. He has made Himself Brother, Sister, Father, Mother, and Husband. To some does He seem to be conceived again within them and become a child, that they may love Him more; that He may show His love for them. We cannot think enough of the hypostatic union—the Incarnation: not even in eternity when united to the most Holy Trinity for ever and for ever, shall we be able adequately to thank Jesus for becoming Man. If we rightly thought of this, we should say, when God came down from heaven to dwell with us "heaven began on earth." Ponder on this thought, the inseparable union of our nature with God. We could not go to God in heaven in this life, but God has come to us. The heavens are bowed down. God came on earth. God remains on earth. God Incarnate dwells in the Blessed Sacrament. Round the Blessed Sacrament are the angels ever clustered, praising the great Mystery of the Incarnation. Jesus Himself, likewise, leads a new life in each one of His elect. Body and Soul and Divinity, He comes to each one in Holy Communion, and animates them with new life; and from Him

Digitized by Google

they receive their strength as the branches of a tree.

We are members of His Flesh, His Body and His Bones. Must not a man love his own body? Consider, then, how does Jesus love us whom He has thus united to Himself!

SECOND MEDITATION.

To know Jesus we must enter into His Sacred Heart. All the loving actions recorded in Holy Scripture were emanations from His Sacred Heart. We see Its tenderness, as He embraced the little children; we see Its compassion as He fed the multitude; we see Its zeal for the honour of the Eternal Father, as He drove the money-changers from the temple. We see Its love at the institution of the Sacrament of Love. In the garden of olives we see this love of the Sacred Heart more human-like; but that human love never had or could reach such an intensity, even in the breaking heart of Mary on Calvary, as did the mother-like love of Jesus mourning and refusing to be comforted for His children

Digitized by Google

who were not; the poor lost souls of the condemned. We see the love of the dying Heart of Jesus, as on the cross It poured forth Its treasure of Precious Blood, and finally broke in Its bitter anguish; and even when dead, shed Its last drop of that saving stream, which, thus shed, will save us from eternal loss, if we will let it be applied to our souls. We rest upon the love of the Heart of Jesus. It strikes us above all else. We know It is patient, tender, gentle, compassionate, adorable in all, but Its love draws us most. Let us, then, think of the various loves of the Heart of Jesus. There is the love of the Eternal Father, the love of the Holy Ghost, the love of His own most Precious Blood, the love of Mary, the love of the holy angels, the two-fold love of souls, the love of the saint and the sinner. In heaven love is pure bliss. On earth love causes suffering; and the greater the love, the greater the suffering. Therefore, as the love of the Heart of Jesus is above our understanding, so likewise is Its suffering. Utterly incomprehensible, utterly beyond human comprehension is the love of the Sacred Heart for the Eternal Father. Oh,

Digitized by Google

you who love God, do you think enough of this? Do you rejoice sufficiently in the thought that though you love God so little, so unworthily yourself, yet one Heart upon this earth has loved and made reparation for the whole human race? That in heaven, at this moment, Human Nature is offering adoration and worship; love such as the united loves of all possible worlds full of created beings could never offer. Whilst Jesus walked this earth in passible nature, that is to say, before the Resurrection, because His nature having then become impassible—as ours will be after our death if we persevere to the end, and so save our souls—could not suffer, but the whole long life, long not from years, but from its intensity, of Jesus from His first breath, was bitter bitter sorrow, grief of heart such as would cause death to any human being if they had to endure it but for one hour. What caused this grief to Jesus, who we know had ever the Beatific Vision before Him, and therefore must have a happiness, a joy, such as no man on earth ever has had? What, then, caused the intense continual agony of the Sacred Heart of Jesus? It was the sight of the

Digitized by Google

injuries done to His Heavenly Father; the sight of the outrages offered Him; the sight of His tender creating love spurned. As Jesus walked this earth, sweet, gentle, beautiful above the sons of men, and people looked upon Him and wondered at the majesty of His demeanour, His gravity, His kindness to all who spoke to Him, it was remarked that though many had seen Him weep, but few had seen Him smile. They noticed, therefore, His grief, but they knew not that He whom they felt constrained to love and follow despite themselves, bore within Him a breaking Heart, a Heart quivering in anguish and grief, such as none could imagine; a grief that none but Mary slightly, and in their degree the saints, ever had the smallest taste of. The little thought of His people for God, their Creator and Father, wounded the Heart of Jesus, but their open insults and sins were still more terrible, and on the cross was verified the words of the Psalm: "Thy reproach has broken My heart." Yes, verily was the agony of the adorable Heart of Jesus brought to an end only by that Heart breaking and ceasing to beat. With wondrous love were the last

Digitized by Google

words of Jesus spoken to His Eternal Father; and that noble glorious Heart made Its last mortal effort, and by Its death offered reparation, entire reparation for the accumulated sins of the generations of sinful beings who people this earth, whether gone or yet to come. Meditate upon this love of Jesus for His Father, and the sorrow it caused Him as well as joy.

THIRD MEDITATION.

Do we ever think of the love of Jesus for His own Precious Blood, the treasure He bore within Him, and by the shedding of which we are redeemed? We do not know Jesus well if we do not value, with Himself and with Mary, this priceless Treasure, by the shedding of which it was decreed by the Divine Wisdom, sin should be forgiven. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." We know not why this is, but we are simply told so by the Word of God. Stream of life sent from the Sacred Heart, coursing through the veins of Jesus, they cannot have thought and prayed aright,

Digitized by Google

who do not love with special love Thee, the Blood of God! Jesus Himself rejoiced in the treasure He possessed. It was His Life. He would give It for His children. He knew the value of Its least drop. He knew how the Eternal Father loved It. It should be offered to His Father, all, every drop. Jesus knew Its marvellous power. It was offered to satisfy the justice of God. It was offered to invoke His mercy. The Precious Blood is mercy Incarnate poured upon us; and Jesus, with arms outstretched, pouring His Life forth for us, pictures to us the illimitable God with arms outspreading, pouring upon His sinful children Himself, His divine attribute of mercy. Linger upon this thought, the love of Jesus for His Precious Blood, and the many reasons why He so loved It; why it was such a joy to Him to possess It. It would offer purest worship to His Heavenly Father. Its every pulsation was an act of adoration seraphim and cherubim in countless ages, for eternity, could not offer. It purchased Mary's Immaculate Conception. It would save sinners. Ah, then! come near to the Heart of Jesus, and tell our Lord how you rejoice in His

Digitized by Google

joy in the possession of His Precious Blood, and promise to daily offer It for the intentions for which He offered It; to make reparation for the outrages offered to It during His Passion, and continued to this day by the way in which people scorn It, since they scorn the channels through which it is given to us, the Holy Sacraments. Venerate and esteem the Holy Sacraments more than hitherto, since they apply the Precious Blood to your souls, and contain graces which neither mind of man or intelligence of angel will ever fully know.*

FOURTH MEDITATION.

THE LOVE OF THE SACRED HEART FOR MARY.

Would that one spark of that love might be lighted within our hearts, and there burn brighter and brighter during this short term of our existence we call time, to be a still more glorious flame of love

* Those who desire to love the Precious Blood, and increase their devotion, should read Father Faber's work, "The Precious Blood."

Digitized by Google

for all eternity! Those know not Jesus who do not know, who do not believe in His love for Mary. He must be to them as a hero of whom we have heard some great actions, and whose statue is to be seen in some public place. Indeed, sad to say, that is the way those outside the Church do look upon our Lord. They have, as it were, but a statue of Him. They keep their eyes upon that; they see no more. They do not know the living loving Jesus: would to God they did! Thanks be to God, however, our dear Lord has vouchsafed to open and reveal His Sacred Heart to His own people, and we, if we will, may penetrate into its recesses deeper and deeper day by day; but the more we know It, and the more we love It, the more we shall find It imbued with love of Mary, and the more we ourselves shall be imbued with love of Mary, in union with It. Jesus, dear Jesus, draw us nearer to Thee, and tell us of Thy love for Mary, show it to us. May we feel, if only in some slight degree, the burning love with which Thy strong loving Heart is beating now, and did ever beat, with love for Thy chosen

Digitized by Google

one, the one who thought not of herself, who sought not her own, the one who thought alone of Thee and Thine, and sought in all things alone to please Thee, and fulfil Thy holy will. Would that we had lived on earth, and seen this love for Mary, as did the dear St. Joseph. Would that we could have looked into the face of our Lord when His eyes were turned on Mary. Few but the angels ever saw the look of love with which the Incarnate Word ever met His spotless Mother. The eyes of Jesus looked tenderly and lovingly on all; with the same sweet look He met those who sought His company sincerely. I say sincerely, because there was one class of people upon whom He could not look thus lovingly. They were people who had made to themselves false consciences—hypocrites. Upon these the face of Jesus looked indignantly—for they were liars; their whole lives consisted of a living lie: and the eyes that looked so sweetly and forgivingly upon the Magdalen, flashed as they turned upon the Pharisees with a gleam of that scathing fire which will terrify the reprobate at the day of judgment, when they will call upon the

Digitized by Google

mountains to fall upon them, and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb.

But though all might read in the face of Jesus His love for the human race, all might not read therein His love for Mary. When Jesus bent His eyes upon His Mother, whether as a little infant in her arms, or when arrived at manhood; whether during His hidden life or when He would return to her in His public life; whether He looked upon her in joy of spirit or in His desolation on the cross; when or wherever it might be that the eyes of Jesus turned upon His Mother, there was in them a glance of love given to no other. It was reserved for her alone, and Mary knew it. It was the love of God for His chosen one shining in the Human Eyes of Jesus! Blessed be His goodness, that one of our sinful race should have given Him such contentment and such happiness. When the hypocrisy and deceit of His creatures and the hateful Pharisees called forth that unwonted display of anger, "How long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?" the thought of Mary, the sweet, the gentle, the pure Virgin Mother, appeased the anger of our Lord;

Digitized by Google

and as, when an Infant, He had fed upon her substance, "He drank from the fair fountains of her being," so now, when His soul hungered for the love of His creatures, desiring to love them, to feed as it were upon them, desiring that they should love Him and feed upon Him, He turned with ineffable complacency to Mary, who alone satisfied this desire, and His love, the love of God and Man overflowing, blessed with the three-fold blessing of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, "the white lily of the Ever-Blessed Trinity,"—His own Immaculate Mother,—and together with her, *all* who should imitate her, who should be given to her as *her very own.*

Dear child of Mary, ponder over these few thoughts. Though the love of the Sacred Heart for Mary is a secret, that is to say, though we believe and know this marvellous love of the Heart of God, still it is hidden from us. Our Lord does not speak of it; still if we seek we shall find, and perhaps have our own hearts touched with some slight degree of the love of Our Lord's, and our souls inundated with some of His content and joy in the possession of

Digitized by Google

Mary. May our souls find rest in her with Him!

FIFTH MEDITATION.

THE LOVE OF JESUS FOR SAINTS.

"One saint gives more glory to God than a *whole nation* of ordinary Christians." "Give me ten men entirely detached from the world, and I have the heart to say that with them I will convert the world."*

The saints knew the value of saints. They obtained this knowledge from the Heart of Our Lord. God grant this same knowledge to ourselves; for surely if we really come to understand the joy of the Sacred Heart in the possession of its saints, we shall wish to make one of them.

If we knew the vast good we could do if we were saints, good not alone to our own family, to our own country, but to the whole world, we would surely wish to become saints, that we might do this good to others, and give such great glory to

* St. Philip Neri.

Digitized by Google

God. Is it possible we have the power to rejoice the Heart of Jesus and yet we will not? Listen to the words of Scripture: "The bridegroom shall rejoice over his bride, and thy God shall rejoice over thee."

What, then, is it to be a saint? It is simply to let Jesus come and live in you. Dear Lord, how He loves us!

What is love? Love is a delighted satisfaction, a peaceful content in some object that it either possesses and is already united to, or desires to be so possessed of and united with. Love tends to union. It is nowhere perfect but in heaven, where the Eternal Father is in peaceful possession of the Son of His Love, and the Son, in perfect joy and repose in the Bosom of His Father, returns the love of the Father; and the mutual love of Father and Son is the Spirit of Love, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

Again, we are told by St. Ignatius that love is shown by an interchange of gifts between the persons beloved. In the Ever Adorable Trinity (thinking with the lowly reverence befitting this great mystery of our faith) the Three Divine Per-

Digitized by Google

sons give Themselves to Each Other with ineffable content in the possession of Each Other.

Mary ever felt this necessity of love, and gave herself entirely to her Creator, Whom she loved sovereignly. Jesus rewarded it. He could not raise her to His Divine Nature, though she could and did —as we all can and do who are in the grace of God—participate in it; but Jesus lowered Himself, and took her nature, and united Himself to her; and thus, in His love for saints, who give themselves entirely to Him, for there is no being a saint without being entirely given to God, He with joy gives Himself to them and lives in them. They, as it were, give a new life to Jesus.

Now I have said there is no being a saint without being entirely given to God. By that I do not mean leaving the world, and devoting one's self to God in the monastery or cloister, as I have before shown, but simply being entirely devoted to God. All are thus devoted who are Mary's Own; that is to say, if they are faithful in their promises to her, and do not stray from the "Path of Mary" into

Digitized by Google

some bye-way, thus letting go the hand that was leading them in the path of saints. "God is wonderful in His saints;" He dwells in them with complacency.

The cherished spouse of our Lord, St. Gertrude, speaks to Him thus: "By the ecstatic rapture with which Thou dost ever take Thy delight in the hearts of those that love Thee." Think, then, what it is to give a home to Our Lord in your heart. This is not an exaggerated expression. Whilst St. Gertrude lived Our Lord spoke to a holy soul, saying: "There were two places where He might be found on earth; in the Blessed Sacrament, and in the heart of Gertrude." Now the favours vouchsafed to saints Our Lord would desire to give also to Mary's Own. He loves to honour His Mother. He longs, too, to give His graces where they will be corresponded with. He loves to draw a soul into close union with Himself. We understand not this love of the Sacred Heart. Would that we did, so that we might remove the obstacles that prevent our union with Jesus. We too often think the love of the Sacred Heart is a pure

Digitized by Google

love of benevolence, which is simply the love that wishes well to others.

True love, however, as before explained, desires union. Let us thank Our Lord that He has this real love for us. Let us ever bear it in mind. Let us daily increase our faith in it. We sometimes almost doubt it. It is so incomprehensible to us how God can love such poor weak worthless things. Even the saints have not believed in the love of God as they should have done.

St. Elizabeth thought that she loved God more than He loved her, until her director showed her that could not be. Let us then meditate upon this grand love of Jesus for His saints. Let us desire to be to Jesus what the disciple whom He loved was. Let us resolve to be saints at any cost, simple child-like saints, hidden ones, unless God calls us to the contrary, and there will then come some day a moment dear, so dear to the Heart of Jesus, that the Scripture calls it by the same word as it uses in speaking of the price of our redemption, "*precious*;" yes, that moment is the moment of death, and it is *precious*, since purchased by the *Pre-*

Digitized by Google

cious Blood of Jesus. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints," is the chant of the angels round the bed of the dying saint. May it be sung at ours.

SIXTH MEDITATION.

THE LOVE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

Many have seen the beautiful little print of the Good Shepherd stooping to the poor little lamb that has been caught in a thorny bush. There are marks of its wool on other bushes near, where it has been torn and wounded with the briars. It has exhausted its strength, and now lies weak and weary; but a kind hand is put out to help it, and the loving eyes of the Good Shepherd are bent upon it. The little lamb is lifted up in His arms. It is put in a place of safety. It is placed in His Bosom, and carried home rejoicingly.

The love of Jesus for the repentant sinner is a love we cannot put into words. It sounds like an exaggeration to say He loves them better than those who have

Digitized by Google

never sinned; but in one sense it is true, and those who say this consoling word for poor sinners argue that the angels rejoice in what rejoices the Sacred Heart, and that the words of Scripture are that "the angels rejoice more over one sinner doing penance, than over ninety just who need not penance."

Jesus suffered for sinners. Now we love that for which we suffer. Even in our own poor little way we feel that. It seems to bring a certain maternal feeling towards the soul we suffer for, a certain property over it. The repentance of a sinner is earned by the Passion of Jesus; He purchased it at a great price. The first word on the cross was a prayer for sinners. The very name of Jesus was Saviour: His mission was to sinners; His errand to bring mercy. Mercy Incarnate is our dear Lord. Full to overflowing was His Sacred Heart with mercy. Beautiful attribute of God, we see thee in Jesus, as indeed we see all the divine attributes made visible in the Person of our Lord. If we truly knew the Heart of Jesus, if we truly loved it, we should not be so supine about the conversion of sinners. Tender

Digitized by Google

Heart of Jesus, gentle with Thy children above the heart of any mother, however loving, fearful for them, anxious, weeping bitter tears for the loss of those for whom He would suffer and die in vain. This is how we should look upon Jesus, if we would truly know Him.

See Him upon the hill top, looking upon His favoured city. It is rife with human beings. He sees them all. Busily they are employed in various avocations. Earnestly are they troubled, seeking to do many things but the *one thing necessary*. Diligently employed upon this earth, they are slothful upon what concerns heaven. Unfortunate people! if thou hadst known in this thy day the things that are for thy peace; but for thy sins they are hidden from thee. And there is One nigh, God descended from heaven, weeping over thee, mourning, sorrowing. "My people! My people! what more could I have done for thee? O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children to My Heart, as a hen doth her brood under her wings, and thou wouldst not!" They are the words of Jesus, the Word of God. God, in whom we live, Who is ever close

Digitized by Google

to us, closer indeed than Jesus was when He spoke those sorrowing words over that unfortunate city, is ever speaking thus to us; but it touches us more when we see Jesus shedding human tears over the loss of souls, over the misery of people so terribly hard-hearted, selfish, and ungrateful as these people of Jerusalem: yet Jesus mourned not alone for their loss, He mourned likewise for His own. Worthless as these sinful people appear to us, they were not so to Jesus. Think what you would feel if you were told the one you loved best on earth would finally be lost; and then you will gain but a faint idea of the pain of the Heart of Jesus for only one soul lost to Him for ever. If we thought more of this we should be more charitable. We meet with hardened sinners, whom it would need a miracle of grace to convert. We turn away from them, we breathe not a prayer for them, we wonder at them, we do all but what our Lord did, viz. grieve over them. We should do them good if we did. Were our Lord's tears of no avail? Verily and indeed they were efficacious tears, and worked the salvation of numbers of poor

Digitized by Google

souls within that town. So, if we were like our Lord, if we grieved over the loss of souls we should save them. In these days, as in the days of yore, when God promised "to save Sodom if ten just men were found in the city," (Gen. viii. 32) so in our days, if God saw faithful souls mourning over sin, and offering reparation for it, He would save those whom He would otherwise destroy, yes, even at the eleventh hour, even on their death-beds. We might, each one of us, if we would, save a soul every day of our lives: and what is it we do when we save a soul?

Come close to the Heart of Jesus; there you will learn in part that that Heart was gifted with exquisite sensitiveness; every grief and every sorrow that human nature feels, that Heart felt keenly; therefore the grief of that Heart at the sight of souls caught and entangled in the meshes Satan had laid for them, was a bitter bitter pain, an anguish unimaginable to us. Likewise the joy of the Adorable Heart of Jesus when a soul is released from the clutches of Satan is a joy it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive. When we enter upon our own

Digitized by Google

eternity of happiness in the Bosom of the good good God, when we rest secure, happy, peaceful, loving, beloved, without a doubt or shadow of fear of ever being separated from the Infinite Eternal God, Who, enfolding us in a rapturous embrace, tells us that, great as our joy is in possessing Him, His joy is greater in possessing us; then we shall have some knowledge of what it is for a soul to be lost. But we shall neither know nor feel what the Sacred Heart knew and felt; for sorrow will be impossible when we have once enjoyed the Beatific Vision with the saints in heaven, and entered into the joy of our Lord. Jesus felt and saw on earth what we shall only see and feel in heaven; He saw God and lived. He felt the warm unspeakably loving embrace of His Heavenly Father, pressing His Sacred Humanity, and causing His Sacred Heart to throb and rebound with love, unearthly love; but this love caused Him every moment excess of anguish, in the knowledge He had of the, not alone hundreds, not alone thousands, but millions and mil-

Google

lions of precious souls,* made to enjoy the happiness He enjoyed, created to be with Him for ever, separated from Him for all eternity, even those belonging to His Church, His very own members. The pain felt by our body when one of its members is cut off is but a faint representation of the pain of our Lord's Soul, aye, and Body too, since His anguish pierced even to His Flesh, His ever suffering Heart thrilling with fresh agony, as whilst on earth He saw each individual soul one by one presented to Him with its eternal doom marked upon it. Whilst likewise He walked this earth He was ever in continual pain from the visible sight of the innumerable redeemed souls continually dropping out of time into eternity, and into what eternity? Jesus, who felt virtue going out from Him, likewise felt the return, so to speak, of the graces given to some most miserable soul, which, having not, has to be stripped even of that which it hath, and the grace given back to the Lord and giver of all grace, to be given by

* Eighty thousand people daily die. How many die the death of the just?

Digitized by Google

Him to some trusty soul, who, having been faithful in what was entrusted to it, would be trusted with still more. Thus is nothing lost, and the saints make restitution to God, aye, restore Him the extrinsic glory He would otherwise be deprived of; but the poor unfortunate soul, what becomes of it? It is bound hand and foot, and cast into exterior darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Through the long busy hours of the day, through the still longer solitary hours of the night, this pain of the Heart of Jesus never ceased, the pain caused by the knowledge that for ever would be detached from Him those human beings to whose nature He had united Himself, but who, by dying in sin, were separated from Him in time and in eternity.

Think of the love of Jesus for souls: and may He kindle within you a spark from His own burning Heart, of love for them. If you have it not, approach our Lord and draw it from Him, or ask our Lady to plead with Jesus, as the Sunamite woman did with the prophet; may be, then, she will herself lift you up and put you close to Jesus, to have a new life

Digitized by Google

given to you, a life like to the life of Jesus, of entire devotion and immolation of yourself for the good of souls. "I have given you an example, that as I have done, you should do likewise."

SEVENTH MEDITATION.

JESUS AND MARY ON CALVARY.

"At last it is reached, that final end for which Jesus came into the world." Jesus is on the cross: Mary stands beneath. The love of Jesus is literally overflowing, as the stream of life and love flowing within His veins is sent forth from its home, His Sacred Heart; and the Precious Blood, as very drops of love, falls upon the earth, for whose sinful inhabitants it is shed. Mary's Mother-Heart is likewise full of burning love, as it makes its grand sacrifice in union with Jesus. Mary stands with breaking heart, offering the Precious Blood that suffering heart had furnished. Angels hovering around, and adoring, join in offering the unspeakably precious treasure for those for whom it was shed with

Digitized by Google

so much love, and they praise the wisdom and goodness of God for His wondrous love and mercy to men. Grieving and sorrowing, Mary makes reparation to the Precious Blood as It lies contemned upon the ground; and this immaculate heart, that sent forth its pure praise in the glorious hymn of thanksgiving, the Magnificat, now joins the glorious choirs of angelic spirits, who around Calvary are endeavouring to atone for the sinful hardheartedness of men; and even on Calvary Mary rejoiced and magnified God. The hymns of angels were joined in by their Queen, as she stood in their midst on Calvary.

Jesus Himself had joy, even on the cross; and it is to this fact that I would especially draw your attention in this meditation, as it is rather too much lost sight of by those who meditate upon the Passion of our Lord, and the sufferings of His holy Mother. It is not necessary, as many think, when they desire to enter into the spirit of our Lord, and compassionate His sufferings, to put away all subject of joy. They rather hinder themselves from possessing His spirit. They attempt to do what our Lady did not do.

Digitized by Google

They do not penetrate deeply into the Sacred Agonizing Heart of our Lord, or they would discover, and their own hearts would re-echo, the Te Deum of thanksgiving that Adorable Heart sent forth to the Eternal Father, even whilst it was literally breaking with extreme anguish. They do not imitate Mary as they wish, for Mary was joining our Lord's thanksgiving, even though the pain of her own pierced heart was so intense that a holy writer tells us it forced her blood from its ordinary channels, and the tears she wept were tears of blood.

Rest now in the arms of Mary, that you may imbibe her spirit, and compassionate Jesus in union with her. You have often looked upon the Man of Sorrows; you have pictured Him in many ways. You have watched the awful anguish of His Face at the time of dereliction, and you saw naught else. Watching now with Mary, what do you see in the Face of Jesus? A reflection, as it were, of the Beatific Vision is on His Face, for He is gazing upon the Godhead. The Sacred Heart is beating with extatic joy at that Vision. The Heart of Mary throbs

Digitized by Google

lovingly in union with Its joy; but another moment and her face grows whiter, her heart almost altogether ceases to beat, for the voice of Jesus breaks out in bitterly grievous words: "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The Vision of the Ever Blessed Trinity, enjoyed by the Sacred Humanity of our Lord, added to His grief, for He saw a part of the human race rejected for ever from its enjoyment with Himself. He knew what those unfortunate beings will never fully know, what they have lost, and from His close union with our nature felt deeply for their loss; and He applied that rejection to Himself, and thus He spoke to His Eternal Father.

Let us implant in our hearts our Lord's love for souls, and beg daily, by our Lord's agony and death, that the souls of sinners may be saved, even at the last hour. Let us look again upon the dying Face of Jesus? What do we see? Seraphic bliss, peace. We look up at our Mother, and we see a wondrous heavenly light in her eyes, peace painted on the gentle face, so like the Face of Jesus. What now are

Digitized by Google

the thoughts of Jesus and Mary? There is the thought of the glory given to God by the shedding of the Precious Blood, the reparation made to the Eternal Father for the sins committed by men. There is the thought that the divine decrees are fulfilled: all is consummated. There is the thought of the countless, countless souls saved, and the glorious saints who would spring from the grand sacrifice made on Calvary.

Think, dear child, of this, and turn to your Mother. Will you make one of those who rejoiced the Heart of Jesus in His death agony? Will you make some atonement to Mary for the bitter grief she endured in watching it? Come, then, and watch daily with her on Calvary, and pray that souls may be saved, pray especially for the dying sinners for whom to-morrow it will be too late to pray.

Our Lady has deigned to appear in our times, as though wistfully regarding the earth, and asking something of its people. The child* to whom she showed herself cried out, as we would all cry to our

* Bernadette, at Lourdes.

Digitized by Google

Mother, if she appeared to us as though in grief which she was desirous we should relieve. "What can I do?" said this favoured child of Mary. And with our Lady's reply we will finish this meditation: "Pray for sinners." But remember that the dying are those for whom her maternal Heart is most solicitous.

EIGHTH MEDITATION.

"I KNOW MINE, AND MINE KNOW ME."

Sweet Jesus, we have sought to know Thee better, and now Thy voice seems to be speaking to our hearts: "I know Mine, and Mine know Me." What, dear Lord, do we know of Thee, now that we have sought to know Thee better, that we might love Thee better? What should it be? Dear child of Mary, if this week has been rightly used, you should have learnt an unbounded confidence in God. You should have learnt to know our dear Lord so well, that the distrust and doubt so many otherwise good Christians have should have passed away for ever. "Perfect love casteth out fear." The old

Digitized by Google

things are passed away. The bondage you were formerly under is to be superseded by a new bondage, the bondage of one entirely devoted to Jesus and Mary. In the place of restraint and fear will then come liberty and love. If you have not this entire confidence, this happy hope and trust in our dear Lord, *you do not know Him.*

It is impossible to know Jesus *rightly*, without trusting Him *entirely*. Strange that Christians should trust so much more relations and friends who have done so little for them, than they trust the good God who has done so much, O so much! With Mary's own this must never be, and will not, if they earnestly strive to fulfil the engagement that they are about to make, namely, *to cast away self for ever, and live by Mary's spirit*, the loving trustful spirit the Mother of holy hope will infuse into those who faithfully walk in her path, and go to Jesus in union with her. If you have not the hope and trust in our Lord of which I speak, humble yourself, for you have as yet but little love of Him. There is no true lasting love of God without trust; and, as I have said,

Digitized by Google

the result of this week's meditation should be a grand reliance upon our Lord's love for us, and a certainty that He will give us all that is good for our souls and bodies, if we do what He requires of us; that is, diligently to seek His graces, and faithfully to co-operate with them when obtained.

If the foregoing meditations have not produced this hope and love within you, now, at least, turn to our Lord, and tell Him how much you would wish to be with Him; in the happy familiarity of His favoured children tell Him that you know you are unworthy, on account of your multiplied sins, on account of your selfish disposition; but that, as you are about to give yourself entirely to His Mother, would He not change a little your cold heart? It is your own coldness that makes you doubt our Lord. If your own heart were warmed you would trust more the Sacred Heart, that is ever burning with love for you; but you do desire to love Jesus better, and perchance, at this eleventh hour of your retreat, He will do what He has not done at its first hour. He will show Himself so loveable that He

Digitized by Google

will draw your heart into close union with His own, and thus will you present it to Mary on the morrow, the great day that is to see you *all her own.*

Draw now closely to the Sacred Heart. Be cleansed and inebriated with the Precious Blood it contains, and resting thus in close union with our Lord, hearken to His voice: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore have I drawn thee to Myself, taking pity on thee." "Fear not: I have redeemed thee, thou art Mine." "Can a mother forget the son of her womb? yet if she could forget, I will not forget thee." "Greater love than Mine no man hath." "As the Father hath loved Me, so also have I loved thee." "Abide in My love." "My peace I leave with you: My peace I give unto you." "Procedamus in pace, in Nomine Domini."

Thus, in union with Jesus, enter into the Path of Mary, praying, "Perfect Thou my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps be not moved."

Digitized by Google

PART II.

Dear aspirant to be holy Mary's own, as I have just told you, the great moment has arrived. By prayer and deep reflection you have decided and received the permission of your director to make a solemn offering, and consecrate yourself, and all that you have, and all that you will ever possess, to Blessed Mary, the great dispensatrix of God's graces. Kneel with loving confidence at the foot of Mary's altar, and slowly pronounce the Act of Consecration.

ACT OF CONSECRATION

FOR THOSE WHO ENTER ON THE PATH OF MARY.

Mother of Jesus, I come to claim thee as my own Mother, by consecrating myself entirely to thee. In union, in imitation of Jesus, I desire to give myself to thee, to love thee, to depend upon thee with Jesus, who was more thine than I shall ever be, though I give myself as wholly to thee as

Digitized by Google

I can, that I may be made like to Him. May I ever love thee with a child-like love; may I love thee with a Jesu's-love. Show thyself a Mother to me; show that thou acceptest the offering of myself that I now make to thee. I am not worthy to be thy child, I have nought to offer thee worthy of thy acceptance. My heart I consecrate to thy maternal heart: but my heart is sinful, stained; it is filled with roots of sin. I then join my heart to the Heart of Jesus. I offer to thee the Sacred Heart that so loves thee, that is indeed also so beloved by thee, so more thy heart than thy own. I can give thee no greater joy than in the offering of that Heart, as Jesus has had no greater joy from this earth than in the offering of thy pure heart to Him. Thus in offering my poor unworthy heart to Jesus, do thou, dear Mother, lend thine to me, that united with it, it may be less unworthy of His acceptance; and in offering my heart to thee, sweet Mother, I beg of Jesus to give me His; and thus in union with the Son of God, made Son of Mary, I give to thee, for time and eternity, my heart and soul, my whole being, that henceforth, both on earth, and I trust in

Digitized by Google

heaven, I may be ever known, in union with Jesus, as "child of Mary." May the Holy Spirit form me to true likeness of Jesus. May the Eternal Father claim me as true child of the Son of His Love.

DAILY PRAYER AND RENEWAL OF CONSECRATION,

TO BE SAID EVERY MORNING BY MARY'S OWN.*

My Queen! my Mother! I give thee all myself; and to show my devotion to thee, I consecrate to thee, this day, my eyes, ears, mouth, heart, myself wholly and without reserve.

Wherefore, O loving Mother, as I am thine own, keep me, defend me, as thy property and thine own possession.

My Queen, my Mother, remember I am thine own. Keep me, defend me as thy property, thy own possession.

---

* One hundred days indulgence every day, if said morning and evening, with an Ave. Plenary every month, on any day: and forty days, every time when, in danger, one says the ejaculation, "My Queen! my Mother! remember," &c.

Digitized by Google

Happy child of Mary, now her very own, now resting in close union with the Mother above all mothers, learn how to spend your day as she would have you. Learn how to advance in her path, in which at present you have made but one step. Your first important matter must be to write out a rule for one year. Let it be a very simple one, so that in course of time you may add to it. This is a very important matter. "Qui regula vivit, Deo vivit." "He who lives by rule lives for God." Show your rule to your director, and then, when it receives his approval, you will find a special grace come from its observance; you may be sure of this, and you may ask God for the blessing He has attached to each individual action of the day now sanctified by obedience. It must, however, be remembered that a wooden rule, that is to say, one that a person would not break for an act of charity, would be more hurtful than none at all. Whenever you break any part of your rule, one Hail Mary should be said by way of voluntary penance.

Each child of Mary will write her own rule; therefore, at the time set down in

Digitized by Google

it, she should rise most punctually. A little prayer over-night to her guardian angel to awaken her, will, if said properly, seldom fail to have the desired effect. The very first act of body and soul should be to God. The sign of the cross, and the invocation of the Blessed Trinity, the indulgenced prayer, "Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation," should be then said; and with a little act of contrition for any stain there may be on the soul, ["My Jesus, mercy," would be sufficient,] a spiritual communion should be made. The words the priest uses in holy Mass, "Corpus Domini nostri," etc., may be said, or any other little prayer she may love, asking Jesus to strengthen her, to come to her, that she may live by Him. This first act of the morning is a very important one, and will help to keep the mind free from all useless thoughts whilst dressing. Let the mind be occupied upon the meditation she is about to make, which, if well made, will steady all the actions of the day, and be as it were a pivot to them. The various actions she performs may likewise keep her recollected. In washing she may say, "Wash me yet more from

Digitized by Google

my iniquity, O Lord, and cleanse me from my sin." Then follows the morning offering, found at the beginning of this part, on page 143.

Sweet Mother, I thy child kneel to beg thy blessing. I approach near to thee; do thou open thy breast, and draw me near to thy sweet maternal Heart. I consecrate myself again entirely to it. May I be hidden in it. May I live by it. Prepare thy child, dear Mother, for the work of this day. Wash my soul* in the Precious Blood of Jesus; clothe me with thy own spirit and graces; feed me with thy milk, and present me thyself to the Most Holy Trinity, that I may offer my morning worship and adoration. Join the sacrifice I owe of myself to my Creator to the sacrifice of Jesus immolated upon our altars; unite me closely to Him, that I may offer to the Eternal Father the sacrifice that is alone worthy of Him. By thy hands, sweet Mother, with lowly

* Here take holy water.

Digitized by Google

reverence I raise the Heart of Jesus as my morning offering to my God. Most Holy Trinity! most high, most loving God! the Heart of Jesus, the living Chalice of the Precious Blood, will worship Thee for me, will praise, and thank, and love Thee for me; will make reparation for my sins, and the sins of the whole world; will implore Thy mercy, will obtain the great gift of Thy Holy Spirit to enlighten and direct me this day. Father! my God and my Creator, I love Thee with my whole heart and soul, with my whole being; but my love is far too little, too poor. May the Heart of love, the Heart of Jesus, supply for me. I, adoring, beg Thy holy benediction. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless me whilst I join the holy angels, singing ever before Thy throne, "Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus." Mary, Immaculate Mother, clothe me with thy robe of purity. Divest me of my own vile garment of self-love and sinfulness. Let me not appear in the sight of an All-Holy God with my own corrupt dispositions; but cover and hide them under Thy own beautiful dispositions, graces, and virtues. I entirely renounce myself, and leave myself

Digitized by Google

in thy hands. Do thou with me, sweet Mother, as thou wilt. I empty myself entirely of myself, that thou mayest replenish and fill me with thy spirit. Lend me thy heart, with which to love Jesus. May thy soul be with me, that I may worthily praise Him! Thus dead to myself, do thou, dear Mother, live in me, and draw, by thy presence, Jesus, to dwell with thee in me. All that I possess I have given, my Mother, to thee. I would this day add to the store which I have given thee; therefore I desire to gain all the graces that I can obtain, and to use them faithfully.

I desire, likewise, to obtain all the indulgences I am able to obtain this day by prayers or good works; and, to enable me to gain them, do thou, O most powerful Mother, bestow upon me the grace of contrition. Thou who art the dispensatrix of the Precious Blood, canst obtain this great gift for me. I would that this day may be a full one with me, full of offerings that I may present to show my love for thee, O Mother, sweetest Mother, who hast so greatly shown thy love for me; and when at night I kneel to receive thy blessing,

Digitized by Google

may I with joy ask thee to accept my little store, and add it to those thou already possessest! I accept all things that happen to me this day as coming from a just and loving God, and offer to thee all that I suffer, that thou mayest unite it with thy sufferings, most sorrowful Mother. I accept and thank God gratefully for the joys He may bestow upon me this day, I who am unworthy of all joy. I join the choirs of angels as they salute thee: "Sancta! sancta! sancta! Maria, Dei Genitrix et Virgo." All ye holy angels, I honour you in and through the Precious Blood. Protect and intercede for me. All ye glorious saints,* I offer the Heart of Jesus for the increase of your joy and glory; pray for me. Dear suffering souls in purgatory, I pray for you, do you pray for me. May your pains be eased through the Precious Blood.

Mother, accept the offering of myself that I have made to thee. Press thy child close to thy heart in thy loving maternal embrace, close to the breasts that fed

* Name your patron saints and the saint of the day.

Digitized by Google

Jesus; and may His Sacred Heart, with Its burning love for thee, atone for my negligences and coldness in thy service. "Nos cum prole pia benedicat Virgo Maria." Amen.

The morning's meditation, which should always be prepared over-night, should then follow, either in church or before a crucifix at home. It should commence, as you now commence all your actions, by renouncing your own spirit, that you may possess Mary's; then, according to your devotion, make your meditation. Remember that, unless it positively interferes with your devotion, variety of subjects for meditation are not so calculated to advance and strengthen your soul as one. If you love Bethlehem you can remain there. If you prefer Calvary, why should you not watch and meditate upon that one mystery, if you can do so without the monotony wearying you? Of course we except great feasts. It is well to keep in the spirit of the Church. We likewise except some people for whom one subject would not be good. My meaning is simply this,

Digitized by Google

that, where it can be practised, higher perfection is attained, and in a shorter time. Every one in his meditation should likewise dwell upon whatever virtue he is endeavouring to attain, or whatever vice he is striving to overcome, and then keep to that one object until he is somewhat successful, even though it may be months, nay, even years, before he has obtained what he wished. To whatever mystery you are most devoted, then, let your thoughts turn in meditation, but ever in union with Mary, thinking her thoughts, willing with her will, that is to say, uniting your will to will what Mary wills. If you are not able to assist at daily Mass, you can assist spiritually, communicate spiritually, withdrawing, as I have said, into the heart of Mary, and asking our Blessed Lord to come to you there. Make your little compacts for the day. Choose, from amongst those given farther on, such intentions and compacts as your devotion leads you to, and you may then go forth, brave and strengthened for the day's combat. Be in earnest. Be zealous. Renew your good intentions constantly during the day. The virtual intention of doing your

Digitized by Google

actions because they are the will of God, is *good;* but the actual intention at the time you are doing them is *better.* It is a fresh act of love of God. In the middle of the day, take at least a few minutes to thank God for the graces received, and make a little examination upon how you have corresponded with them, bringing to your mind your meditation, and the subject of your particular examen; that is to say, the predominant passion you are striving to overcome, or the virtue you are endeavouring to acquire. The only way to acquire solid virtue, it must be again repeated, is the performing of acts of that virtue.

There is one remark I would make upon the performance of our daily duties. We know, of course, we must use our own exertions to the utmost of our power. It would be presumption to expect help from God if we did not do this; but when we have done all we can, and still find an overpress of work, or some difficulty arises we did not look for, we may and should pray for extra help. This is not thought of enough. It is true we invoke St. Anthony when we lose anything; but

Digitized by Google

there we stop short. Why not invoke other saints upon other matters? Why not invoke the angel who is ever by our side, to assist us and show us the best way of performing our actions?

Saints who have been noted for any particular virtue have a particular power of impetrating it for us.* Thus we should ask St. Francis de Sales to obtain for us his wonderful sweetness and gentleness; St. Francis of Assisium, his remarkable humility; St. Gertrude, her holy liberty; St. Philip Neri, his spirit of holy joy; and so on. The saints possessed all virtues, but were generally remarkable for one more than another. There is no doubt, for instance, of the power of St. Joseph's intercession in all matters; still, let people show to God, when in distress regarding their temporal matters, the anxiety—for anxiety it was or it would not have been so meritorious—of the dear saint who had charge of the temporal affairs of the Holy Family, and they will

* When we invoke the aid of the saints, we should always thank God for the graces He bestowed upon them, and offer the Heart of Jesus for the increase of their glory.

Digitized by Google

most certainly experience marked assistance, and still better, their former *distress* of mind will be supplanted by the spirit of *trustful* anxiety the foster-father and protector of Jesus ever possessed. Not that it need be feared, if Mary's own are faithful in the offering they have made of their temporal goods to her as well as their spiritual riches, that they will be doubtful and depressed when their temporal matters are at a low ebb, or even when they are actually reduced to want. It will be but a trial. It is, indeed, needful that they should, some time or other in their lives, taste the poverty our Lady herself endured so constantly. It is needful and necessary, because Mary's own will find, as a rule, their wants will be supplied in a manner so remarkable, that I should not have the slightest hesitation in asking any one, who has for a certain time walked faithfully in *the path of Mary*, whether I have exaggerated in the least in saying,* the help received by Mary's own in time of need is similar to the interpositions of Divine Providence in regard to the saints. I speak what I know. Do

* *Vide* "Path of Mary."

Digitized by Google

you walk in this path, and it will not be long before, with a happy confidence, smilingly you will pronounce the same words, and rejoice in the knowledge of this "secret," by which, *possessing nothing, you have all things.* This certainty of our Lady's care for your wants, and the experience of her maternal love in your regard, will not make you negligent in working, as all Mary's own must work, whether they are rich or poor. No, their time is no longer their own. It must be all employed well. They must go out in the morning to work for their "sweet Mother and mistress," and show at the end of the day their earnings. If they are so happy as to be in a state of poverty, they will necessarily work for their daily bread; but those who have plenty must do something for their subsistence. Their daily duties must be performed in a spirit of poverty. They can work for and visit the poor. No need to mention all that can be done, there is so much. No one can truthfully say "they are standing idle because no one has hired them." We can all see so well how much there is to be done. We are each to bring what we can to add to what we have al-

Digitized by Google

ready deposited with our Lady. All our labours, works, and prayers, go to this store; and surely it should make us happy to think we have it in our power to do something for Mary. Our Lady has said, that even she, all-powerful as she is, cannot help us unless we help ourselves. That is to say, we on earth must join our prayers and works with her prayers and wishes for us in heaven. None of Mary's own, then, can be exempt from doing something. We know suffering is a prayer and work, all in one, and when well borne is better than either; so that invalids cannot say they can do nothing, when they can offer patient suffering, and so many other acts of virtue, too often forgotten in time of sickness, so that the fruit reaped from that grand harvest-time is not what it might be, and what God intended it should be. All we do will be pleasing to God if we are faithful to these four little rules of the Venerable de Montfort: to do all our actions *by Mary*, *with Mary*, *in Mary*, and *for Mary*. To renounce ourselves continually, and our own corrupt interior; and to put in the place of our own spirit Mary's spirit. Procure for yourself the beautiful

Digitized by Google

little book "True Devotion," where you will find the practices for those who truly love this devotion fully explained. You will not appreciate at first the value your actions acquire in the sight of God from being done in the company of Mary; but the "true client of Mary lives on the faith of Jesus and Mary, and not on sentiments and sensibilities." This is a lesson it takes long to learn.

As Mary's own began the day with her, and during the day walked in her company, so likewise do they conclude it and rest with her, their heads pillowed upon her breast; and if they wake in the night her name is upon their lips, so that it may be said of them, that, though they sleep, their heart watches. Their hearts are fastened to the sweet heart of Mary, so that when the day is ended, and their body and soul, once for ever given to Mary, had been used as "her own" thought she would wish what belonged to her to be*

* The intention of performing what you do in union with Mary is far better than any intention, however good, without. For instance, it is good to pray for the Church; but the intention of praying in the way Mary would, if again on earth, makes the prayer far better.

Digitized by Google

used, they rest, weary, perhaps, but happy; yes, happy as the child on its mother's bosom. The Mother's heart watches and prays for her own during the long hours of the night, and they sleeping have an "unconscious consciousness" of her care and their safety under her maternal protection, the same security and peace as the sleeping infant in its mother's arms. The little one sees not the look of love with which the mother looks upon it as it rests; neither do Mary's own see the loving eyes of their Immaculate Mother watching their slumber. To her most faithful and cherished ones she casts down an inexpressibly sweet look, for she sees Jesus resting in them. In the tabernacle He ever rests, "seeming to do nothing but love men" who neglect Him; but in the hearts of Mary's most faithful ones Jesus has found a home far more pleasing. When the good God came down from heaven to dwell on earth, the living loving heart of His creatures was the place in which He sought to dwell. He remains there with joy and unutterable love, repeating what the angels re-echo: "My delights are to be with the children of men."

Digitized by Google

COMPACTS AND INTENTIONS TO BE REMEMBERED.

In praying, to recollect to offer our Lady's Heart to Jesus, and to have *her* intention. To join your own to it constantly, renewing your intention, recollecting how much more pleasing your actions are to God when you are doing them with the desire of doing what our Lady would do if now on earth. You must ever remember that, as you belong to her, you must ever be doing what she would wish to be done by those who belong to her.

In every breath you may have the intention and desire of spiritually receiving the Blessed Sacrament. You may have the wish, likewise, that every breath you draw may remind the Eternal Father of the last breath Jesus drew upon the Cross, and constantly you may thus be interceding for those who are dying in sin, offering the death of Jesus for them. In taking food, you may think of Our Lord's intention when He ate; of the thought He had that, by that action, He would increase the

Digitized by Google

Precious Blood He was going to shed for us. We may have a similar intention to increase our strength by the nourishment we take to work and suffer for Our Lord.

It is an intention of incalculable service to join our prayers and works to the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass, always being offered in some part or other of the world.

We may make a little compact with Jesus, that every beating of our hearts may be as the unceasing echo of the heavenly canticle the angels ever sing round the throne of the Most High, that every pulsation of our blood may praise Him, and be to Him as the continued "Holy! holy! holy!" that is ever sung in heaven. That every breath we draw may be an act of love. (St. Gertrude.)

That He will unite our wills to His by the love with which He united His Sacred Humanity to His Divinity, and that by that union we may never be separated from Him. (St. Gertrude.)

We may, at the commencement of the day, make the intention that every time we say a Hail Mary we will offer our Lady the Heart of Jesus.

Digitized by Google

To have the intention of doing our actions well, in reparation for those who do similar actions sinfully, is very meritorious; by this means, if we are simply reading an amusing book, the intention of making reparation for those who are reading bad books would make some atonement to God.

These little compacts are of great value in God's sight. Let your own love suggest some to you every day.

On one occasion St. Gertrude seemed to see many persons clothed and adorned with the *merits* of St. Bernard. The Saint was much astonished, as these persons had not done works like his. What, then, said St. Bernard to her? "Is she less beautiful who is adorned with the ornaments of another, than she who is adorned with her own? Assuredly not." (Prayers of St. Gertrude, page 143.)

What would St. Bernard answer if he was told that any saint had seen Mary's own clothed with her beautiful robe of grace, which she casts about those who give themselves entirely to her? (See "Path of Mary.")

Digitized by Google

Have the intention, then, of offering yourself to God every morning, not clothed with any vestment of self, but with the double clothing of the merits of Jesus and Mary, as far as it be possible. "All her domestics are clothed with a double clothing."

RECOMMENDATION.

Let every one of Mary's own wear the Blue Scapular of the Immaculate Conception, besides that of Mount Carmel.

Let every one of Mary's own carefully recollect themselves daily, between the hours of 12 and 3 o'clock, the time of the agony on the cross: and let them recall the seven last words, viz.:

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."—Luke xxiii. 34.

"To-day thou shalt be with Me in paradise."—Luke xxiii. 43.

"Woman! behold thy son: son, behold thy Mother."—John xix. 26.

"My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken Me?"—Matthew xxvii. 46.

"I thirst!"—John xix. 28.

Digitized by Google

"It is consummated."—John xix. 30.

"Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit."—Luke xxiii. 46.

Let every one of Mary's own often exclaim:

Jesus! Mary! Joseph! I offer you my heart and my soul.

Jesus! Mary! Joseph! assist me in my last agony.

Jesus! Mary! Joseph! may I breathe forth my soul in peace with you.

Digitized by Google

PART III.

TRUE LIBERTY,

THE ESSENTIAL SPIRIT THAT THOSE WHO WALK IN THE PATH OF MARY SHOULD AIM AT, AND WILL ATTAIN TO IF THEY ARE FAITHFUL.

There are various spirits to which people leading an interior life are attracted. Some have a leaning to one, some to another. Some people have an attraction to extreme mortification, some to prayer, and so on. Now, as I have said in the "Path of Mary," the essential spirit of this bondage of Mary is *liberty*. I wish now to explain this a little more fully. In the state of original innocence we should all have enjoyed this liberty, and why? Because our wills would have been so united to God, that, as they would never cross His, there would ever have been the happy familiarity of Father and child. There would have been no constraint.

Digitized by Google

God walked in the paths of the ancient Paradise, and conversed with the man whom He had placed there, and man held familiar happy intercourse with his Creator. Unrestrained by any fear, he spoke to his God with the deepest reverential accent, but with simple confiding words of love, and God loved this communion with Himself. It was His wish that man should thus speak with Him.

That "vesper walk" of God in the beautiful Garden of Eden, and His loving condescension to the man whom He had created, is a good and wholesome thought for meditation. It brings us so near to the good God, and makes us know Him better, as indeed all Scripture does, if we read it in a proper spirit.

Sin, however, came and destroyed the union of man with his Creator. Man's knowledge of God gradually dwindled into little more than the knowledge that He could punish, and that He was a God who would punish. But Our Lord, who came to reinstate all things, did He not restore this union? Yes, indeed; He made it a far closer and more loving union than it had been before. Is not Holy Communion

Digitized by Google

a greater privilege than the "vesper walk" of God with Adam? Our Lord came to restore all things to their proper order, and even make creation more beautiful in its regeneration than in its creation. "Our Lady," says her faithful servant De Montfort, "is the true terrestrial paradise of the new Adam; the ancient paradise was but a figure of her. This most holy place is composed only of a virgin and immaculate earth, of which the new Adam was formed, and on which He was nourished without any spot or stain, by the operation of the Holy Ghost who dwelt there. There are in this divine place trees planted by the hand of God, and watered by His Divine unction, which have borne and daily bear fruits of a taste divine. There are flower-beds enamelled with beautiful and various blossoms; virtues shedding odours which embalm the very angels. There are meadows green with hope, impregnable towers of strength, and the most enticing houses of confidence. There are, in this place, an air of perfect purity; a fair sun without shadow of the Divinity; a fair day without night of the Sacred Humanity. There is a river of humility, which springs

Digitized by Google

from the earth, and which, dividing itself into four branches, waters all that enchanted place: and these are the four cardinal virtues." The holy writer likewise tells us, that, "it is but the Holy Ghost who can make us know the hidden truth of these material things." Therefore, dear reader, lift up your heart to the Holy Spirit, to enlighten your mind to understand them. I have quoted at length, as it is important for you to comprehend well this comparison of our Lady to the ancient paradise. You have entered "the Path of Mary," but you have yet much to understand of the grand step you have taken. By walking in it, you are restored in some sense to that familiarity with God, you are imbued with that spirit of liberty enjoyed by Adam before his fall. As I said, Our Lord came to restore all things. He has paid so great a price for our redemption, that, notwithstanding the awful change caused in the world by sin, we should be restored to our former state, nay, a greater, a higher one. This might be the case throughout the Church, but it is not so. Some favoured souls enjoy this liberty of spirit, but it is a rare gift. It

Digitized by Google

was possessed, for instance, by St. Gertrude, who was so dearly loved by Jesus. It was, in fact, the possession of this very grace which made her so pleasing to Him; for a saint, enquiring of Our Lord what it was so endeared His spouse Gertrude to His Sacred Heart, received the reply: "It was the liberty of spirit possessed by Gertrude." The servant of Our Lord, who thus enquired of Him, surprised at the answer, said that it would have seemed to have been her ardent charity, or some other great virtue. The rejoinder of Our Lord was, that liberty of spirit possessed all virtues within itself. We may perhaps explain this by saying, that true liberty is never possessed by any soul in which the Holy Spirit does not dwell in an eminent degree.

Those who live more by the Spirit of God than their own are according to God's own Heart. Those who live in the company of Mary will ever do this, as she did, who lived and spoke by the Holy Ghost, who "possessed her in the beginning of her ways." All, therefore, who walk in "the Path of Mary" will possess this holy liberty, for which St. Gertrude was so

Digitized by Google

remarkable and so loved by Our Lord. In fact, there is not a grace given to the saints that Jesus will not bestow upon Mary's own, *if they are faithful.* He desires to honour His Mother in her favoured children. Would you know in what consists this liberty of spirit? It is acting truthfully, in fact, as you would really act in the presence of Our Lord. As Our Lord said, it contains all virtues. You see how this is, since you could not act thus without a great faith, hope and love. Do you think, if you were with Our Lord face to face, as those were who lived with Him on earth—if you, sitting at His feet with Mary, could look up and see the lovely countenance of Our Lord, and read in the gentle eyes, "in which the very sweetness of the Godhead shone," His love for you and all those whose nature He had for ever assumed to Himself,—do you think those old scruples, restraints, etc., could any longer trouble you? No! you know Our Lord wills not you should serve Him with restraint and diffidence, but with unbounded trust and confidence. Endeavour to act simply with our dear Lord. He is not a hard task-master. Some little

Digitized by Google

examples may make you understand better the spirit of which we are speaking; but you must not think that any depreciation is meant of that holy austere spirit practised by many souls. They were led by an attraction of God's Spirit to those great austerities and wonderful self-denial of all pleasure. Far be it from me, also, to hinder the daily mortifications so necessary if we would at all advance in God's service. The gentle St. Philip, when told that some one was a saint, replied: "he will be if he is *wholly mortified*." But there is a spirit possessed by Mary's own, combining both penance and pleasure. To give a simple example. To be thirsty, and remain so for a long time, is a very great penance, and a very good one. Scripture mentions, as one of King David's greatest acts, his refusal to drink water that was brought to him when he had great need. It is well, then, to practise this penance; but there are times when it would be better not to do so. Now the spirit of liberty would know when it would be better not to practise it. The spirit of restraint would not know when to intermit an accustomed penance. A per-

Digitized by Google

son under the bondage of scruples, etc., would, very likely, when he had found it was more prudent to relax a little some accustomed penance, still feel uncomfortable about it. A person who possesses the spirit I speak of would really derive more profit from omitting a penance than by practising it at certain times. Supposing it is a sultry summer's day; you are parched with thirst,—what would you not give for a glass of cold water, or some cooling drink? You, however, have a good habit of not drinking between your meals. Your thirst increases upon you. You are doubtful, whether or no, to break your habit. According to your custom, if you are one of Mary's own, you look up confidently to know what is best. The thought occurs to you, you will take the water as though Our Blessed Lord Himself were giving it to you. You hold the glass to your lips as though He were giving you to drink, as indeed He is. You thank Him for it. It brings an act of love in your heart that a week's fast might not have produced, as you think of the goodness of God and His loving providence to His creatures, and you have drawn closer

Digitized by Google

to Him than you might have done if you had not performed this little simple act, which some people might put down as an immortification on your part. This same spirit will extend to other matters. You will accept little pleasures in a simple child-like way, and you will enjoy them with Our Lord. If it is a change of scene, some beautiful country that delights you, there is no strict need to mortify that pleasure of sense. No, rather thank Our Blessed Lord that He makes you happy, and gives you these little pleasures; thank Him, above all, that it is His presence with you makes you enjoy these pleasures, since, thank God, He is all in all to you, and nothing without Him could give you joy. Be happy, then, for God wishes it. There is another view of this holy liberty of spirit, which it will be well to notice, especially those who suffer much, and that is, how to receive everything as coming from the hand of God. When this is well learnt, a great lesson is acquired; but it takes long to thoroughly acquire it. There are some people who have continual trials one upon another. Different people take them different ways. Some will be very

Digitized by Google

patient, but they brood over them too much; so much so, that their soul, instead of being strengthened, as it should be, grows, I do not like to say weak, but certainly is very far from acquiring that strength which suffering well-borne produces in a marvellous manner. Now the fault very often in these persons is, that they deny themselves all pleasure. That is not good. God no doubt puts something in their way in which they could take interest and pleasure; but they will not make use of it. This is not wise. In the times of ease from suffering, whether bodily or mental, enjoy the interval God gives you. He is wiser than you. He knows what is good for you. It is not well, during the *time of trial*, to seek exterior comfort. This might be dangerous; but when the time of temptation, or whatever your cross may be, is past, then take gratefully whatever joy or comfort God may send you, as Our Lord allowed and was pleased that the angels should refresh Him, when, after His temptations in the desert, "the angels came and ministered to Him." Taking both good and evil from the hand of God, see all things as happen-

Digitized by Google

ing by His permission. Everything profits; nothing is lost of the various accidents of the day when this spirit is preserved throughout. Our very letters are received and opened with the thought that they come by the will of God. I know well that the little self-denial of putting by a letter to be read next day, not looking at a new book at once, etc., are acts of mortification very pleasing to our dear Lord. We can almost fancy we see the benign smile upon His face as He watches the young beginner putting by her letter, anxiously endeavouring that those around should not see the act, it being a little secret quite between Our Lord and herself; but as we advance in the spiritual life such things lose their interest, and the mortification therefore loses its value; and, besides, we who are imbibing more and more the spirit of Mary, are acquiring a different spirituality, seeing God everywhere and in everything. Even our letters are sacred things. They are taken as from God and answered accordingly. If they bring us good news, the spirit of liberty shows us how to take the news as brought by some good angel

Digitized by Google

for us to joy. If the letters bring a cross, Mary's own know well how to accept it. Both the one and the other are accepted as the will of God. If a book is given, it is taken as from God. Presents, little acts of kindness likewise, are taken as coming from Him, as indeed they do.* Unkindness, contradictions from others, etc., are taken as just punishments, as they likewise often are. If God has given you the grace to receive pleasure from many little things, as children do, the spirit of liberty teaches you how to accept such little pleasures gratefully and simply. Those who possess this holy spirit, of which I am now writing, are the happiest people on earth. Now we all wish to be happy on earth as well as in heaven. Then behold how you may be so! Believe me truly, if you enter into the paradise of Mary, and remain therein, you will in some sense be restored to that state of happiness enjoyed

* St. Francis de Sales speaks of this spirit, this union of will with God, as having in it a certain kind of expectancy. You are not supine about what will happen, but you look forward to it as a manifestation of God's will in your regard, prepared to accept all things.

Digitized by Google

by Adam before his fall, when he walked the Garden of Eden in his original justice, "thanking God for a life so sweet," thanking the good Creator who gave it to him, taking joyously the favours by which he was everywhere surrounded. The beauty of the garden of paradise was to him a reflection of the beauty of God; the very air, redolent with the sweet scent of lilies and roses, seemed to him, as its breezes fanned his cheek, like the breath of God. Beautiful ancient Paradise! place made where God might create and meet the object of His eternal love,—man. Fit emblem art thou, indeed, of that still sweeter place of delights, Mary, Immaculate Mary,—the new Paradise, where God again held communion with His creature, and a union took place between God and human nature that will never be broken. Our Lord came to restore all things, and to give us an example in all things. He united Himself to us by means of Mary, and it is His wish that we should be united to Him in the same way. It is by this "path" He came to us. It is by the same sweet "path" He would have us go to Him; and there can be no doubt that, if

Digitized by Google

the whole world were devoted to Mary, as Jesus, its Lord and Creator was, or rather, had but a spark of the devotion and love that burned a glorious flame within the Sacred Heart, that world would indeed be restored, as it is the wish of God it should be. "Behold, I make all things new." (Apoc. xxi. 5.) But when, O Lord? "It is not for you to know the times or the moments which the Father hath put in His own power," was the answer to a question regarding the future, asked even by Thy apostles, to whom it was given to know heavenly secrets. Nevertheless, we may and will pray that Thou mayest hasten that glorious time when, Mary living in all hearts, Thou Thyself, Jesus, wilt live in all hearts:*

* It is the general opinion of saintly people, that after the Church has passed a terrible time of trial and persecution, there will be a glorious time, when infidelity, errors, schisms, etc., will have passed away, when "all will be good." As, unknown to one another, so many holy people concur in this prophetic view of the future, it is useful to think of it, and likewise to ask ourselves, is it not probable that this happy time will be in "that great age of the Church which is to be the Age of Mary"? If this is the case, as it is so natural to believe that, since Mary was the in-

Google

when all Thy people will have "but one mind and but one heart," loving each other, so that their souls seem knit together, loving Thee, their good Creator and God, sovereignly and entirely. "Oh, let God arise and scatter His enemies; and let them that hate Him flee from before His face." "Arise! O God: hasten Thy time and come. Send Thy servant to make known Thy ways and prepare Thy paths." Tell Thy people that it is by the way of Mary and her sweet path that You came the first time, and will come the second. O God, who openest Thy hand and fillest with Thy blesssing every living creature; O Most Holy Trinity, let Thy holy benediction descend upon this earth, which in Thy righteous anger Thou once didst

strument God made use of to begin His regeneration of the world, it is by the same means He will complete it. Again, Father Faber writes that the devotion of the Ven. De Montfort to Mary—the devotion we here advocate—promises to be the "authentic opening of that peculiar devotion to Mary which is to be the characteristic grandeur of the later ages of the Church." If this view be true, if the coming of God's kingdom on earth is to come with Mary by means of this devotion, can its importance be exaggerated? Can any opposition to it be wondered at?

Digitized by Google

curse. Behold now upon this earth the Treasure poured forth for its redemption, the Blood of Jesus! Look! O Lord God, the Mother's heart that gave It pleads with and in her children. Show Thyself God! Show mercy! Amongst the choirs of angels there is a whisper they would fain speak to the inhabitants of earth. Guardian angels have spoken it to special souls:—"When the Mother of Mercy reigns upon earth, the God of Mercy will dwell there in greatness, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

Dear reader, I conclude these Spiritual Exercises with a few remarks. First of all, I would ask you to extend this devotion to Mary by all means in your power. If you visit amongst the poor, you may often do so by word of mouth, in a simpler way than could be done in any book for general reading. I would likewise ask you to lend to others what you have found has done good to your own soul. But, above all, I would ask you to pray most fervently that this devotion may be known and practised throughout the whole Church. Would that the Church, the Body of Our Lord, were devoted, entirely given to our

Digitized by Google

Lady, as was Jesus its Head. The faithful, some time since, unitedly asked that the Church might be consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This, it is evident, could not be: the Church being already His mystical Body.

Ah! if the faithful had made a different request it might have been granted. If they had asked that the Church might be consecrated to the *maternal heart of Mary*, the answer from Rome might have been very different. Fitting time for such a consecration is the present. I showed, in the first chapter of the "Path of Mary," how the spouse of Our Lord, the Church, seems to have followed Him through His life, exemplified by the religious orders, commencing with the hidden life shown in the early contemplatives, Fathers of the Desert, etc.; followed by the public life, when Jesus went about everywhere, preaching and doing good, this time being shown us in the various Orders of Friars Preachers, Jesuits, and others; then, in the Church and in religious communities, arose a wonderfully increased devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, many keeping watch night and day, and one especial

Digitized by Google

Order, devoted entirely to Its perpetual adoration. In our own times, one beautiful Order has arisen devoted to the Adorable Mystery of Our Lord's Agony in the Garden.

Thus does Our Lord's life seem to be replicated in the Religious Orders. There is another fact to be noted. It was during the time of the Passion of Our Lord that Mary came forward. She, who had kept so hidden during the other parts of the life of Jesus, was at the time of the crucifixion as conspicuous as Himself. Listen now to the words of Father Faber, he is speaking of devotion to the Precious Blood.* He writes: "It is particularly a devotion for the later ages of the Church, and will grow with that sublime augmentation of devotion to our Blessed

* Our space in this little work is too limited to do much more than throw out suggestions for thought, leaving the reader to follow them more fully, so I do no more than remark here that, following the same train of thought, the devotion to the Precious Blood, now so greatly on the increase in the Church, would naturally follow from the idea that the Spouse of Jesus is now being mystically crucified with Him, since it was during His Passion He shed His Blood.

Digitized by Google

Lady, which the prophecies and revelations of holy men and women have announced as the characteristic of the last saints." Again, he writes of that peculiar devotion to Mary which is to be the characteristic grandeur of the later ages of the Church. Again, he prays for that great age of the Church which is to be the "age of Mary!" Mary appeared openly before the world during the crucifixion of her Son. Openly did He speak to the only one of the apostles present to represent the Church: "Behold thy Mother." Jesus knew well what would please Mary, and in His death-agony, wishing to leave her a pledge of His love, He confided His Church, in the person of St. John, to her maternal care. Let us then turn to her ourselves as our own dear Mother; but let us likewise pray that, in God's own good time, Mary may be publicly proclaimed *Mother of the Church.* Her sweet voice seems speaking to us, saying: "Come all to me; I am your Mother." An earthly mother could forget her child and fail in pity towards it, but your heavenly Mother will protect you in the evil day. Behold the evil day is upon us, Mother; we call

Digitized by Google

upon you. A reply seems to come: "Bring unto me all the Church, that I carried in my womb, since I bore therein its Author, Jesus. The Sacred Heart of my Son conceived this Church, and confided it to me ere He died upon the cross. Consecrate the Church to my maternal heart and I will show myself a Mother."

Let us pray that our Holy Father, from the cross on which he is united to his Master, may proclaim, in union with Him, to the nations of the earth: "Behold thy Mother," and consecrate the Church entrusted to his care to the maternal heart of Mary.

I have shown you that it has been the opinion of saintly people that, in the later ages of the Church, there would be a marvellous increase of devotion to our Lady. This would likewise follow from the Church now replicating in herself the Passion of our Lord, since, as I have said, it is at the time of the crucifixion that Mary is most conspicuous. It is the time of His life in which she takes the most prominent part. From that time, Mary, though ever quiet and simple, and loving to be hidden, was more known. The apos-

Digitized by Google

tles took counsel of her. The early Christians looked up and sought to speak with her, and from her learned to know and love their crucified Lord, her Son, who had laid down His life for them. It was in Mary's company the apostles received the Holy Ghost; the Church assembled in the upper chamber received a new life and strength from the reception of God's great gift, the gift of His Holy Spirit. In the future, if we may believe the revelations of numberless holy people who concur unanimously upon this point, after the whole land has with desolation been made desolate, there will be a short but glorious time. Thus, if this happy period of the Church's history really follows the sad time we appear to have already commenced, will the Spouse of Our Lord rise with her Master, glorious and triumphant, and reproduce in herself His resurrection.

I commenced the little work, "The Path of Mary," with words of warning; it is with the same words I finish this sequel to it. Be warned, dear reader, I pray you, as I pray for myself, "Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat;" but keeping close to Mary,

Digitized by Google

his snares will return upon himself. The temptations he has laid for you will, if you are faithful, increase your eternal reward, and to increase your eternal reward means to bring you closer to God for all eternity. The enemy of souls may distress you, as indeed we must be distressed to see his power over God's people; to see that he who, hating God and not being able to wreak his anger upon God Himself, strives to avenge himself upon those who are made to the likeness of God, and loved by Him as the very apple of His eye. Sad indeed it is that he so often succeeds in his plots. We might hinder them if we would; but shame to us! we are not as earnest in our Master's service as the emissaries of Satan are in his. Let us commence, however, at once, remembering that it is by Mary we can crush his head, and that he lies in wait for her heel. If, by words and example, by all means in our power, we make known this beautiful devotion to Mary, Satan's hold upon men will be loosened; and well he knows this; and therefore he leaves no stone unturned to prevent them adopting it.

The book "True Devotion," which I

Digitized by Google

have so often mentioned, was itself hidden away from the sight of men for over a hundred years. Its writer, the Ven. de Montfort, prophesied that Satan would endeavour to destroy it, "or at least envelop it in the silence of a coffer, in order that it might not appear," which really happened.

ON DEVOTION TO MARY, FOR THE GRACE OF A HAPPY DEATH.

If Mary is thus so plentiful, so bounteous in mercy to her own in life, words cannot tell what she is to them at the all-important hour of death. Those who, during life, by the practice of the devotion I have shown you, have been guided by her spirit, and have practically learnt the hidden sweetness of the "Path of Mary," will be especially favoured at the hour of death. It is then she exercises her power, and shows more than ever in life the greatness of her love. The hour of death is most precious to Mary. If the angels rejoice over a sinner doing penance, how much more does their Queen rejoice; and

Digitized by Google

when is that penance more perfect than at the hour of death? Death is God's penance for sin. Accepted as such, with the interior dispositions required by God, we can offer no greater penance; therefore do the angels and their Queen rejoice at the death of the penitent. Again, it is to Mary a time of joy, such as mothers have a slight taste of in the birth of their children, when they remember no more their anguish for joy that a child is born into the world. So with our Lady at the death of her children; she rejoices, her mother love overflows. Did she not suffer for them at the foot of the cross? Has ever mother suffered for her children as our Immaculate Mother suffered for hers? And behold now the moment comes when her child will be entirely hers; and she offers to Jesus the fruit of her sufferings. For we may well believe that, but for her dolours, but for Mary's, so to speak, unnecessary sufferings,—for she had not upon her the sins of others, as our Lord had, neither had she to answer for sins of her own, as we have, being without the least spot or stain of sin, consequently she came not under the law which entailed suffering

Digitized by Google

upon a sinful race—may we not then well believe that God rewarded the generosity of the sweet Heart of Mary, that offered itself voluntarily to suffer, after the example of Jesus, and in union with Him, for love of the human race, by giving her the greatest reward He can give her, as I said before, after the possession of Himself, by giving her children, by giving her as it were Jesus again in His members? Therefore, those who have been led by the Spirit of God to see the beauty of this "Path of Mary," and have entered it, should consider they are the especial fruit of Mary's sorrows. As God, when Abraham offered up his only son, promised him in return that "He would bless him, and multiply his seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that is by the sea shore; and that his seed should possess the gates of their enemies; and in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed, because he had obeyed the voice of God;" so Mary, when she offered her only Son upon the cross, and even assisted at the sacrifice, watching with breaking heart His death agony, was promised by Him in return a long-lived seed, and that the

Digitized by Google

hour of death should be her special province, which office of Mary the Church shows to us by the words she puts in the mouth of her children in the Hail Mary: "pray for us now, and at the hour of our death."

Abraham, when in will alone he offered his only son Isaac as a sacrifice to God, was promised by God in return that he should be the father of a great family. Thus, when Mary offered Jesus, and joined her own breaking heart to the sacrifice, what can we believe was the reward promised by God to her, but that she should be the joyful mother of many children, who would owe their life, their immortal life of happiness in heaven to her; that a certain number who might have been otherwise lost, owe their salvation in a certain sense to the graces Mary impetrated for them; that a certain number owe their perfection, their sanctity, to the suffering Mother Heart of Mary; that our Lady, imitating the Good Shepherd, looked after the lost sheep rather than after those in safety, and begged for special graces for those whom she forecast in futurity might otherwise be lost; and that in answer to

Digitized by Google

her earnest desire, God gave to her in a special manner a certain portion of His Church, that they should belong to her entirely, that they should be known in eternity as Mary's own, and that in eternity they should themselves know they owed their happiness to her, and love her with a love which they would feel in part on earth if they knew how much they owed to her? Yes, we may well believe that many walking in the "Path of Mary" would have been lost but for the special graces given to those who walk therein; and it will increase your love for Mary if you who enter will be constant in thanking God in humility of heart for the grace He has vouchsafed to you, in guiding you and giving you a special light, to enable you to understand the word here written, which all cannot understand. You are one of those whom our Lady took pity on, and led into this sweet way of salvation, where the dew of divine grace being more plentiful, you obtain the extra assistance by which you are now persevering, and hope to persevere to the hour of death, as most certainly you will if you are constant in this devotion. Your death will find you

Digitized by Google

lamp in hand, bright and watching; and you who have committed yourself during life to the care of Mary, with a confidence that increased daily since you entered the sweet way of Mary, will feel confident in her marvellous protection at the hour of death. If your place of rest during life has been the bosom of Mary, it will be your last resting place on earth. You will speak to her: "Mother, my life and death I confided to thee whilst on earth; it was with thee I spoke to Jesus, it is with thee I leave this earth. Answer for me when I come into the presence of the King." And the Mother of fair love answering, will perform her last earthly office for the child of earth, to make it more speedily ready to be a child of heaven. With indescribable love Mary will wash you again with the tears of perfect contrition she will have infused into you, which, even though you by accident lost the last sacraments, would purify your soul, and cleanse it from every spot. But with joy Mary likewise loves to assist her child for the worthy reception of the great graces of the last sacraments. With what love does she give Jesus to her child! Cor-

Digitized by Google

porally in the sacrament her child receives its strength, its very life, and spiritually does it continue to feed, by means of Mary, till its last breath, *upon the Fruit of her womb, Jesus;* feeling, with the devout servant, lover, and beloved of Mary, (Suarez) that it never knew it was so sweet to die. O Jesus! come, hasten the moment when I may belong wholly to Thee, when blissfully Mary will give what she has brought forth to her child, her happy work, now saved, now Thine for ever. Such is the sigh of Mary's own, were it not for their Mother's whisper: "Wait, I know what is best for thee." And then, leaving yourself in child-like trust, you know and feel assured that, at the time when you are best prepared, your Mother will obtain that your journey may be ended, and you yourself led by this "sweet Path of Mary" into the green pastures of the Ever Blessed Trinity; there in peaceful rest with Mary, there in extatic rapture united for ever to Jesus, there in the jubilant embraces of the Holy Spirit to find your home in the Bosom of the Eternal Father, and be for ever ever more happy.

Digitized by Google

FOUR CONFERENCES UPON THE FOUR WORLDS,

THE ONE WE ARE NOW IN, AND THE THREE WE MAY BE IN: HEAVEN, PURGATORY, AND HELL.

FIRST CONFERENCE.

We live immersed, busied about many things. Our lives are taken up with a variety of occupations; our minds are divided with so many thoughts that things good to be remembered are forgotten. We know many things, but the things most necessary to be remembered we are oblivious of; that is to say, we may carelessly consider them, but we do not seriously meditate, with calm clear minds, truths that need considering in a thoughtful serious manner. Let us *think* about certain things we *know*. Knowledge is one thing, but we must make use of our knowledge. Now it often happens that

Digitized by Google

people who live in a place do not see the curiosities of that place as do strangers. Visitors to London see more of the London sights than the inhabitants. So with us, we are so wrapped up in our businesses, traffics, friends, marriages, births, etc., that we do not take time to think of things nearer home, if I may so speak; that is to say, what we are, where we are, why we are, where we come from, where we are going to, why we are going there, etc.

What are we? Creatures of God. Where are we? Living in God's world of mercy. Why are we? Because of the infinite goodness, mercy, and love of God; we are created for Him. Where do we come from? We come out of nothing. Where are we going to? To heaven or hell. Why are we going there? We are going to heaven because we shall have done the will of God on earth; some of us are going to hell because we have not, and shall not have done that Holy Will.

Let this first conference be upon what we are, and where we are. We are creatures of a good, beneficent and loving Creator. We are made by this good God for Himself. We are placed in a world where

Digitized by Google

God has an enemy; but in a world where Jesus dwells, though in a hidden manner. We are placed there with every means of defeating our enemy; but some people care not to use these means, and are easily seduced by him; others fight for awhile, and then grow tired and give way; some fight one day and not the next; others basely desert God and go over to His enemy. Some there are, however, who fight bravely and perseveringly, and defend not only themselves but others from the snares of Satan.

We may see to which class we belong, and consider for awhile to which we should belong. Then, again, we think where we are. In a world of mercy. We are creatures specially honouring God's attribute of mercy, since, being fallen, we specially need it.

We are in a world where we may be very happy, but where many of us, through our own fault, are not so. We have grand riches at our disposal. We have means daily and hourly of increasing our happiness in heaven, aye, and on earth also. We have but to acknowledge that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from

Digitized by Google

above, coming down from the Father of Light;" and there is literally no end to the graces, the precious gifts God will bestow upon us, so long as we render to God what belongs to Him alone, not considering them as given for any excellency in ourselves. God will pour upon us with lavish hand. There is absolutely nothing God will not give us, since He has exhausted Himself in giving us Himself, His Only Begotten Son; and yet we can live in the world discontented, unhappy. Ah! let us give up ourselves; let us cast away self-love; let us turn with our whole selves to God, and we may have what the dear Archangel Raphael wished us, joy with us always. We know the history of the young Tobias, and how the angel conducted him to his father, and upon leaving, quitted him with the salutation: "Joy be with you always." We are all journeying to our Father in heaven; we have an angel to guide us who is wishing at every step that we may have joy with us always, and yet we will not have the joy of God that the joyous angels round about us wish for us. We are so engrossed with ourselves; we are so bent upon keeping our

Digitized by Google

mind upon ourselves and those around us; upon interfering in matters that do not concern us, without the intention of doing good, that we are of the earth, earthly; when we might be, though on the earth, heavenly.

Our lives might be beautiful under the most commonplace circumstances. We think the life of the cloistered religious beautiful; we think of the holy souls reciting their rosaries in quiet cloisters; we visit the silent chapels and hear them intoning the praises of God in the lovely psalms of David, and we are happy in the thought of the glory given to God in these holy places. We return to the world sighing that our lives are so different, so worldly; we sigh over it, and return to our accustomed work in the same earthly spirit as before, when we might return to it with a determination of making our lives heavenly, of living to give glory to God, of living in His presence upright, of walking before Him striving for perfection, of imitating our holy God by being holy in thought and word; for it is not the place that can or will prevent one bent upon leading a holy life from doing so. The world itself unfallen

Digitized by Google

is a holy place, as I have said in another work.* We think of the angels, and wonder at their sinning in the very heavens. But our place of probation is not so very different from theirs; the heaven they were in was not then the heaven where God reveals His Beauty, where His Divine Essence dwells in inaccessible Majesty. They saw not God any more than Adam; their communion might not have been much closer than the intercourse of God with Adam when He walked with him in the evening; though the angels certainly being pure spirits, could better communicate with their Creator, with their God, Who is a pure Spirit. But now that Jesus has come, having our nature as well as His Divine Nature, abiding ever upon the earth in this nature, communicating Himself to us in It, can we say that even the angels in the heavens during their time of probation were nearer to God, more closely united to Him, than we are? Let us carefully consider this truth. The world we are in is better, more favoured, more holy, even though fallen, than we

* "The Attributes of God mirrored in the perfections of Mary."

Digitized by Google

think of; and we have but to will to make our lives holy and they will be holy and pleasing to God. Yes, we may lead in the world a life as pleasing to God as the religious; their sanctity consists in fulfilling the will of God in the state to which He has called them; so likewise in the world, the sanctity of each person is comprised in their fulfilling the duties of their state, besides the endeavour they must make to unite their souls to God; and God has given us wonderful examples of saints living in the world amidst the most ordinary duties, who were favoured by Him with most precious tokens of His love, and united to Him in a remarkable way. Now, I do not mean in the least to decry the religious state, God forbid, but I do say that, as our Lady led as holy a life in the midst of her domestic duties—I am speaking of the time before the Annunciation—as when devoted entirely to the service of God in the Temple; so with us, all may be saints, great glorious saints, in the midst of the bustle and toil of the world. It is our own fault if we are not saints. Look back* at what I have already quoted

"Spiritual Exercises," page 77.

Digitized by Google

from the "Divine Sequence." Yes, we hurry, we scramble through life, and we miss its dignity, its beauty. We do not live it as Mary lived it. When the sun shines upon even little places they look beautiful. Let the Sun of God's Presence be ever before us; and we shall walk through life with a halo of light surrounding us. We have not to do extraordinary things, but to lead simple, humble lives. Not that the extraordinary lives of some saints are not to be admired: they *are* to be admired, they give great glory to God; they are singular instances of His Wisdom. As it has been remarked in the life of St. Simon Stylites, what would have struck the people of those times like that wonderful life? Their barbarian natures were struck with wonder and awe; they believed in the God whose servant for love of Him could lead such a life; they were converted by hundreds.* The beauty of a

* I remember well being in a place where the soldiers in the neighbourhood begged to come every night to the Church to say their rosary. The good priest consented, and likewise so far seconded their good desires by coming into the church to read for them. And what did he read? "The Fathers of the Desert." Yes, and the

Digitized by Google

simple ordinary life, led for God, they would have altogether missed, and we, like them, are not much better. Again, I must not be misunderstood to be holding in low estimation the three religious virtues, poverty, chastity, and obedience. No, indeed; but we may practise poverty in the midst of riches; we can be poor in spirit. Again, we may be chaste in either state of life, and we have bright examples of virginity—St. Cecilia, St. Agnes, &c.—practised in the midst of the world, in the midst of temptations and dangers that, thank God, all in the world are not exposed to. We can be obedient. We have all opportunities of practising obedience. We can love, and esteem, and practise it, even when placed in a position of command. Besides, have we not all a director whom we should obey, as St. Francis de Sales tells us, like an angel from heaven, nay, as Our Lord Himself? Does He not tell us: "he that hears you hears Me"? We may

soldiers would listen in wonder and admiration at the lives led by those early contemplatives; the simple lives of St. Aloysius, or B. Berchmans, would have been passed by without much admiration by them.

Digitized by Google

practise obedience in many other ways, and know that whoever we obey, whether good or bad, the merit of our obedience lies not in the amount of obedience, the grandness of the act of obedience, but in the manner we obey, in the conformity of our obedience to that of Jesus, of its being done in union with and in imitation of Him. We do not see the world as God sees it. We do not think of the beauties in the midst of which we live. All about us seems commonplace and ordinary, when we are living in the midst of marvels and wonders. We are ourselves far more beautiful, far greater than we ourselves know. We are temples of the living God. God lives within us. "The Christian should be another Christ." Let us, in our quiet times—or if we have not quiet times, let us make them—sit quietly in the Presence of God, with our good angel at our side, and with Mary ever near to those who look up to her as Mother; and thus let us remain, thinking over what we are and where we are, and why we are thus living, as far as God has revealed to us the reason of our creation. Ah! if we knew our own happiness; if we did but under-

Digitized by Google

stand the gifts of God; if we but realized the goodness of God in creating us at all, in placing us in this world of mercy, in destining so glorious an eternity for us; if we realized our happiness in being members of His Church, in living in the midst of priceless treasures, of which the Church is the custodian, and which she gives her children with such liberal hand. If we realized more especially the real Presence of Jesus with us, according to His own words: "I will not leave you orphans: yet a little while and the world seeth Me no more; but you shall see Me, and you shall know in that day that I am in My Father, and My Father in Me, and *I in you.*" Comforting words of Jesus. Yes, He is ever with us, our Lord and Master, God made Man. The Spirit of God, we know, filleth the whole earth, but we creatures of flesh and blood realize not the Holy Spirit in Whom we live: but Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, the dear Lord who walked the streets of Jerusalem, Whose tender Heart throbbed with love as ours throbs towards those we love, only His is far far greater love; that loving Saviour is with us still, His Heart beats with the

Digitized by Google

same undying love for men who so little love Him in return. He is ever with us, caring, providing; His ministers pardon in His Name; they give Himself in Holy Communion; they bless in His Name; they give His graces. We have all we can desire, since all that is desirable may be obtained from God by prayer. We may have sinned, but we need not be unhappy; God is merciful, He desires to show mercy, He desires we should be saved. We are living in a world where God is prodigal of mercy, where every moment can be spent in impetrating mercy for ourselves or others. We may have corporal or spiritual infirmities, hard to bear, but prayer will relieve whatever distress we may be in, either by removing the infirmity or by obtaining patience to bear it, knowing that we are drawing nearer and nearer to God by the suffering He has laid upon us. What holy, happy lives we might lead if we did but know our own happiness, if we did but look upon things more from God's point of view, if we used the means He gives us to make us happy in time and in eternity. We are ever close to the healing waters, we need

Digitized by Google

no angel to stir them, to move them for us, we may do so ourselves at any moment; miracles will be worked by the great good God at the wish of His little creature. God loves to condescend to us, He loves to give, He loves to be treated with confidence.

You say you are too unworthy to be heard. Surely we all know that. But you may say you are particularly unworthy, or you have been guilty of some infidelity to God, and therefore cannot expect Him to listen to you, you cannot hope to be heard; nevertheless, turn to Him with confidence; say, as you are so unworthy it will be in His own bounty and goodness alone you confide; it will redound to His glory to listen to you; you trust to His infinite mercy. Persevere hopefully in your prayer, and you may obtain what you might not have obtained so quickly, when it might appear to you you could ask with a better face, because in prayer it is God alone you should consider, and His desire to give. If we seriously thought of all this, if we valued what is indeed above all value, above all price, then we should be sorry to lose one moment of that time

Digitized by Google

we now enjoy, and by the use of which we may procure treasures for all eternity. Let us then resolve to lead noble lives, not perhaps noble in the sight of the world, but noble in the sight of God, and the holy angels and saints; a life replete with good acts, little hidden acts. We may or may not be called upon to do grand actions in the sight of men; nevertheless, our little every-day acts will be glorious and beautiful in the sight of God. Is it not Father Faber who tells us that an act of the love of God is a more substantial, real, and valuable thing than we can conceive? This, then, is the view we should take of this life and the world we live in, a broad view; we must not be narrow-minded, we must get out of ourselves and our low view of things; we must take a broad view,—a broad view in its true sense, not what the people of the present day call a broad view—we will strive to take God's view. We were in His mind from all eternity; we will beg that mighty Mind to enlighten and clear away the darkness of our understanding, the mist and obscurity produced by sin, the ignorance that resulted from the fall, when the science and intuitive know-

Digitized by Google

ledge given to Adam was lost, never to be restored but in exceptional instances, in which God gave to His saints what we esteem wonderful gifts, but which were only a restoration of the original graces enjoyed by man before the fall. We must learn wisdom now in a different manner, we must plead and pray for it. It is well to desire it, but we should desire the wisdom of the saints, their knowledge far far exceeding that of the scientific men who are now a days so devoted to the acquiring of knowledge; they are right to desire it, they are right to seek for it, but they put aside the most desirable knowledge, they seek for their learning the wrong way, they have not even the wisdom as well as the humility—humility since it was truthful—of the heathen Plato, who said that the *Divinity assisted* those who were seeking wisdom. No, the learned men of these days have put God on one side, they do not need His assistance, even if they believe there is a God at all: their reason will show them all things, they will believe nothing they cannot see; and yet they cannot know, save upon human authority, whose children they are; but

Digitized by Google

nevertheless they firmly believe the parent who says to them: You are my child. Would we had that childlike spirit so loved by Jesus. A good child is a wonderfully lovely being, with remarkable gifts. "There are two people I fear," said a holy bishop to a nun, "children and saints, they both read you." Yes, a holy child is a miniature saint. Let us pray for the simplicity, the purity of children. We can have it. All those who have lost by sin all those graces so loveable in children can have them restored, and the past will be entirely obliterated; they will breathe a new atmosphere; they will commence their heaven on earth. "Behold, I make all things new." Dear loving Heart that spoke these words! Jesus, what didst Thou mean by them? My child, the world was sunk in sin, the dignity of the nature created by Me in the beginning, so pure, so beautiful in itself, so still more beautiful by My Grace,—this nature, through the snares of the enemy of souls, lay steeped in iniquity, defiled, displeasing to My sight. In the Bosom of My Father I took pity upon it; I sent My message to Mary; I came on earth; I took that poor

Digitized by Google

human nature to Myself; I assumed it to My Divinity; I have ennobled it, I have raised it to higher grace than it had in its primeval innocence. "I came to restore all things," and all shall be restored. Yes, let all who thirst come to the waters; I give Myself to those who ask, and where I dwell the Holy Spirit lives in love, in liberty, and that soul has a new life, it is born anew, it is restored entirely to My grace and friendship, and more pleasing in its re-generation than in its first. If My grace is with the children of men, and corresponded to by them, they are raised by it to a higher glory than original justice would have obtained in heaven; they will walk on earth in simplicity and truth, beloved by Me with exceeding love. If the people of the earth will listen to My Voice, well will it be for them, happy, joyous, with the liberty of the children of God. I came indeed to restore all things; I came indeed to make all things new. My Heart has poured forth for you Its Life. I have given you a new life. I have come that you might have life, and have it more abundantly. Take, then, of My abundance. Drink and be inebriated,

Digitized by Google

My dearly beloved. Satiate yourselves with delight from the everlasting springs. I am He Who giveth to those who seek Me with a sincere heart. Give yourselves to Me, live in Me, by Me, for Me, and you shall live *with* Me even on earth, and for ever in heaven.

SECOND CONFERENCE.

WHERE WE MAY BE.

We may be, we ought to be, we hope to be in heaven. Let us pray to the holy angels, let us pray to the saints, let us beg earnestly of our Mother, the Queen of Heaven, to show us a little what heaven is. We cannot picture heaven: it is impossible. With many people, to imagine heaven, to make any picture of it in their minds, hinders rather than helps their devotion. Others it helps very much to imagine they see the glorious saints, the beautiful angels; to picture the sweet face of Mary, the Sacred loving Face of their Lord, with the tender Human eyes, that will be one day turned upon ourselves with that inexpressible look of love which wel-

Digitized by Google

comes each soul into heaven, fills us here with both joy and fear: joy that such will be with us; fear that it may not through our own fault. The one thing that we all look forward to in heaven is its security, and the absence of fear or dread of any kind of our having attained our everlasting home. Others look forward to heaven principally that they may see God; others long to possess Him, to be united to Him more closely than they can be on earth. To some it is a sensible pain, that seems to increase day by day, that they are detained from God; and some have an intense longing to see God happy.

These are various views people have of the happiness of heaven, and no doubt they are all truthful, but the latter are more truthful than the former. We shall be glad to be in heaven, to feel secure, to rest, to see and hear Jesus and Mary. Oh yes, but the grand happiness that will overpower all other is to have the Beatific Vision of God, to be engulphed in that vast ocean of goodness and of love, and to feel that the God whom we so loved on earth, whom we grieved to see was so little loved and honoured, who seemed ' 'an

Digitized by Google

outcast in His own creation," to feel that God supremely honoured, loved, most loveable in Himself, unspeakably happy. We cannot speak of these things, we cannot write that for which there are no words. If we would raise our thoughts to heaven, if we would strengthen ourselves to fight our way (to many it seems a very weary way) to heaven, by the thought of that haven of happiness, we must simply prepare our souls by detaching them from all thoughts of earth, by humbly begging the grace to go in spirit to the abode of the blessed, and then "taste how sweet the Lord is to those who love Him." Yes, dear God, we will rest awhile in time, we will detach ourselves from this world, and taste in spirit the eternity of Thy heavenly kingdom. For ever and for ever, one calm existence; no past with tormenting regrets, no future with harassing fears; one peaceful present; every desire satisfied, every want supplied, every craving of the heart fulfilled. Yes, that grand desire implanted in every heart, the desire of being loved, fully granted; for the great God loves with His infinite divine love the little finite crea-

Digitized by Google

ture made by Him, and placed in time that it might enjoy with Him eternity. Oh! the repose, the rest, the delightful delighted trust of the creature as it lies in calm repose on the bosom of the great Creator. It has reached its end. It is not tending anywhere now. Its journey is over, the journey that at times seemed so long. All is finished. A new existence has commenced, a blissful life, in comparison with which the past life seems not to deserve the name. Is it not satisfaction to a weary traveller, who has been for months travelling night and day, to reach his home, and who is sick and wearied, longing for that home, longing to see his loved ones, longing to rest from his continued journeying? Is it not happiness for that traveller to reach home at last? And yet what a faint comparison is this to our arrival at heaven, our true home! The new feeling of repose will itself be a pleasure we have never before experienced. We are all on earth continually tending towards something. It is not our resting place or lasting home. We are hardly conscious to ourselves of this feeling, it being our habitual state, and we have

Digitized by Google

had no experience of that unalterable unchangeable state enjoyed by those who enter the eternity for which God created them. It will be an entirely new joy, new pleasure, that sudden sense of rest after the journey of this life. Ah, the journey may have been long, the days weary, but of what trifling importance is that when the glad end arrives. Good God! when our journey ends may we be left in peace and rest with Thee. We were created for Thee: may we, living for Thee in time, live for ever with Thee in eternity.

In heaven every feeling of sense will be filled with pleasure; pleasures of which we have no conception. Here on earth the good, for fear of being led by the pleasures of earth to forget heaven, have denied themselves pleasures that God intended them in an unfallen state to enjoy; worldly people likewise have given themselves every pleasure they could; but if the pleasures were sinful that hindered their enjoyment, and they could not feel the pure pleasure that in an unfallen state we should have enjoyed in so many things. The eyes, ears, mind, all are capable of

Digitized by Google

marvellous pleasure, of which we sometimes on earth have a slight taste upon viewing beautiful scenery or hearing sweet music. If, then, the senses of the body are satiated with pleasure, what shall we think of the delight of the soul in its proper element, away from this material world, not confined to a mortal body that mastered and oppressed it, but in a bright world, in an immortal body, where it can breathe freely, where there is no opposition from that body, but where the body and soul are in perfect harmony, both forming the living being called into existence to praise and love the good God in whom it now rests happy in its proper sphere, flooded with a delight it needs the omnipotence of God to support that creature to bear? Ah! that that glad hour had dawned upon us, and that we had passed the portals of eternity to commence our new life; would that the glad day had come when the blessed ones will stand before the Lamb of God clothed in immortality, when they will see the Redeemer who lived and died for them, when their heart and flesh will truly exult in the strong living God, and with their eyes, the

Digitized by Google

eyes so often filled with tears on earth, they look upon their Lord and love, and meet the welcoming loving look which will accompany the words, perhaps the first to sound upon their delighted ears after the glad resurrection of their bodies at the day of judgment, "Come, ye blessed of My Father." O good God! to prepare such happiness for us so unworthy. Happy, glad day to look forward to, when human nature, regenerated, recreated, washed white in the Blood of the Lamb, enters heaven in triumph; "when hell's despairing courage faints;" when the devil, though enraged, retires vanquished, confessing he is conquered, for human nature has triumphed. The places that he and his colleagues would have filled in heaven are now occupied: the human race, so far weaker, so far inferior in itself to that glad glorious angelic host of which he once formed a part, are raised by the power of the Almighty to these and higher heights of glory. "Blessed be the good good God," is the cry that will come to our lips, who stand at the right hand of Jesus in that glad day. "Blessed are ye," is the response of the angels to us, as they echo

Digitized by Google

the words of the Eternal. "Blessed are ye poor for Christ; His kingdom is now yours. Blessed are ye who have mourned; behold you are now comforted. Blessed are ye who have hungered and thirsted after justice; for ye are now replenished therewith. Blessed are ye meek, the heavenly land is yours. Blessed are ye who were merciful; lo, you have obtained mercy. Blessed are ye clean of heart; for you now see your Lord. Blessed are ye who are peacemakers, you are now His chosen children. Blessed are ye who have suffered persecution for justice' sake; for yours is the kingdom of heaven for ever and ever." "Blessed are ye of My Father," speaks the Son of God. "Blessed are ye brethren of Jesus," is the response of angels. Blessed are those now in the heavenly land; but blessed likewise are those who are now on earth, walking in the way of the Saints; suffering, toiling, but rejoicing, they walk their way, the way of the cross, and hereafter they will attain the glad courts of heaven, and rest with Jesus in the bosom of the Eternal Father, and sorrow will be no more, but God shall wipe away all tears from the eyes that

Digitized by Google

have mourned, and they will indeed be comforted, their joy will be filled, and that joy no man shall take from them, for the very joy of God shall inundate them; they have mourned for many things, they have mourned that they loved not God enough, now they love God with hearts expanded to love as they knew not on earth it were possible to love, now they have all their desire, and they rejoicing feel that God has His desire, they are His delight more than He is theirs. They, having Him, desire nought else, but rejoice in Him and His. O glad glad union, unspeakable bliss, unknown joy, when the soul bathes itself in the vast ocean of divine delights, when it touches and tastes God, when it reposes in "the beauty of peace, in the tabernacles of confidence, in wealthy rest," and may indeed exclaim with truth, "Lord, it is good to be here."

THIRD CONFERENCE.

PURGATORY.

Let us now visit a world very very different from the one we live in, our present home, the earth, and very different from

Digitized by Google

our future home, heaven—Purgatory. We breathe more freely as we spiritually visit this region of God's creation than when we climbed the heights of heaven and attempted to dive into the depths of the Divinity. We enter purgatory, and what do we feel? A sense of relief, a freedom from some oppression which on earth had been a slavery to us, though we were hardly conscious of it. Yes, here too is security from that terrible loss of God, of which, if the mere thought is so terrible to us, what will the reality be? Yes, in purgatory there is peace, there is rest; but likewise terrible, terrible suffering. Yet the patience of the souls in purgatory is sublime, it is something that, with the exception of some saints, is a virtue we can never see exercised on earth in the same perfection as in purgatory. Purgatory then must be beautiful if such beauteous flowers bloom there, such virtues. Yes, purgatory is beautiful; purgatory is a sinless place inhabited by beautiful souls, souls practising heroic virtue, souls dear to Jesus, souls whom He loves most tenderly, most compassionately, for He pities their pains, He feels for their

Digitized by Google

sorrows, He is longing to assuage them, to put out the fires with which they burn, by pouring upon the wounds of their soul the healing balsam of His Blood; He lets us perform this office for Him; He lets us tend these sick souls, He gives us the cordials to administer to them. Dear act of charity to the dead, too often forgotten! What pleasure we may administer and do not; what alms we may give, but selfishly withhold; what friends and benefactors we might make for ourselves, who would help us when we have hastened their relief, but we do not: and as we have measured to others it will be meted to us. These suffering souls have great power with God. They may plead for us on earth, though they cannot for themselves, and God is pleased with their unselfish prayer, as He ever is with the prayer of those who unselfishly forget themselves in the midst of trouble to care for others. These suffering souls are full of charity; they love us, they love one another, they are indeed possessed of all virtues, since we are told that no saint on earth was ever so humble as the souls in purgatory are, and in possessing humility we possess the grand virtue of

Digitized by Google

virtues, the one without which we have none. Dear holy souls, what comfort it is to us to think of you. What consolation in the thought of the joy you are to the Heart of Jesus, the glory you give the Eternal Father. There, in that sinless land, lie these loved ones of Jesus, redeemed by His Blood, suffering and loving, loving and suffering, patient, humble, devoted, entirely resigned to God's holy will, adoring Him by their patient suffering existence, offering a worship well-pleasing to the God Whose purity, justice, and mercy also are glorified so greatly by these His creatures, who lie longing to be with their Creator for pure love of Him. Yes, their love exceeds their pain, or rather their love causes their greatest pain, and they long for God, not so much from desire to be released from their other pains, as to be released from the greatest suffering they have, their absence from the good God. If it were possible to possess Him and suffer, they are willing to suffer. But this could not be. They have seen Him whom they long to embrace; they have met the eyes of Jesus looking upon them, loving them, and they want Him. Oh!

Digitized by Google

they want Him so, and they cannot have Him; they cannot dart into His arms and rest on His breast, they must go to Him, they must have Him; but no, they are kept back, they know they cannot get. Will that day soon come, or will it be long? Ah! if Christians on earth have hearts, surely surely they will pray, and put those souls where they so want, where they are so wanted to be.

Souls who now on earth find your happiness, consciously or it may be unconsciously, from your nearness to Jesus, think what it must be to enter another existence, where there is no Blessed Sacrament, no Holy Communion. Think what it must be, after having passed through one life longing to be with Jesus, longing to possess Him, to have to enter another perhaps far longer life, still longing for your Lord. Yes, and longing as you never longed before, since your soul, no longer trammelled with the body, seeks union with its Spouse, its Life, with a yearning, with a heart-rending longing of which we can form but a faint, or we might perhaps more truthfully say, no idea at all on earth. To many on earth their life has

Digitized by Google

seemed a long one. They would not like to begin it and go through it again. I think we very few of us realize that we may, and possibly shall have to spend a far longer term of existence in purgatory than we have already spent on earth. If we did but realize this fact, we should be more anxious to obtain indulgences, both for ourselves and for the holy souls. We should pray for the disposition of soul it is necessary to have in order to gain indulgences, and that disposition is the one which makes us pleasing in God's sight. It is the proper disposition for every creature of this fallen earth; the one which brings grace upon grace from God. It is the contrite humble heart God loves, cherishes, and specially delights in, and to which He can refuse nothing. We must not think indulgences cannot be gained. Would the Church grant them if they were impossible to be gained? No, indeed; no, we must fulfil the conditions enjoined, whatever they may be,—and have a truly contrite heart—and if we do this we gain the indulgences we are seeking for, the same as in performing the necessary conditions for receiving a sacrament we re-

Digitized by Google

ceive that sacrament. An indulgence, a plenary indulgence especially, is a great thing, but of course not so great and wonderful as a sacrament, though it is nevertheless true that the dispositions for obtaining indulgences must be more perfect than are necessary to receive any sacrament; but as I said before, those dispositions are the very ones God so loves, and which we should desire to have for that reason alone. Let us then adopt at once the good practice of endeavouring to obtain indulgences. Let us put them, as we have put ourselves and all that we have, into the hands of Mary. Blessed Leonard tells us that those who have this pious practice of striving for indulgences are on the road to sanctity. We cannot do, perhaps, many of the things the saints have done; let us then pick up the treasures they have left by their great holiness, by their extraordinary lives of penance and prayer. Let us humbly devote ourselves to this work of devotion, and we shall be doing a great deal for the Church. To gain a plenary indulgence usually implies prayers for the Church. Again, assisting the suffering souls, we are helping that

Digitized by Google

part of the Church that cannot help itself. We are placing its members in that glorious triumphant part of the Church in heaven, where they can so powerfully plead for us militant members on earth.

Let us then, to-day, make the earnest resolution of striving every day to gain, not alone one, but many plenary indulgences; and let us acquire the habit of having constantly on our lips little ejaculatory indulgenced prayers. We shall indeed be blessed by these holy souls; nay, more, by Jesus Himself, for our charity, our work of mercy to them; and we shall ourselves daily increase in goodness and therefore in happiness. We, who have given our little store to Mary, will every night be able gladly to hope that we have worked well and pleased our Mother, if we have obtained many indulgences for her suffering children in purgatory. Infinite treasures are at our disposal in God's grand holy Church. Let us show our faith, hope, and charity, by our earnest endeavours to succour these suffering ones of Christ.

Digitized by Google

FOURTH CONFERENCE.

WE MAY BE IN HELL.

This is, for many souls, a most useful thought. We shrink from thinking of it; we cannot contemplate it; we turn away from a momentary reflection upon that terrible, yet nevertheless certain truth, that we are in danger of losing our souls. That there is even a risk, a *slight* risk, would make any reasonable person shudder, would make them work out their salvation in fear and trembling; and those who treat this grave truth carelessly are not reasonable people, they are not thoughtful people, they are devoid of common sense, which would make them seriously bring home to themselves this certain fact, that there is a hell, that numbers of the human beings who people this earth, hundreds, thousands, millions have entered it already, and will enter it before the day of doom. Oh, it is a fearful thought! good for many to consider, but most certainly likewise not good for every one to meditate upon. It is too awful for some minds,

Digitized by Google

they reel at the terrible thought, I may be eternally lost! I may be separated for ever from God, the good good God, my all, my only desire, my only love, my life. It is possible I may be separated from Him. What, I, who cannot think how it would be possible to live through one day away from God! I shall be utterly cast out from His holy Presence for ever! God, I cannot think! No, God, I dare not! My God! my God! what wilt Thou have me to do? Save me, save me from Thy awful justice. Mary, make my soul an eternal monument of God's mercy. Mother, I want to see you, I do so love you. Am I not rooted in you? Is it possible I could be torn right away? Jesus, most tender Lover of my soul; Jesus, sweet companion of my exile on earth; Jesus, dwelling ever within me; Jesus, my comfort, my delight, my Lord and Love, be separated from Thee! how is it possible? How could it be? Jesus, in lowliest humility, but with the confiding trust we need to reanimate our sorrowful souls at the terrible thought that we may lose Thee, we ask how could it be? How could we be separated? and yet it too may

Digitized by Google

be! Oh! Jesus, Jesus, it cannot be thought of. I want Thee. I must have Thee. Thou art more to me than my own life.

Ah! yes, we want our Lord, and He longs to possess us; but numbers, numbers daily, hourly are dropping into hell. There is a hell. Yes, there is a place where for ever and ever we may be kept from God; we ourselves and those we love, all, all are in danger, that is to say, they are running the risk of losing God, of being cast into hell. There are many many things to be written about hell; there is much known in the very fact of sin being there almost visible in shape, every sin seen, every one in hell horrible with the visible marks of sin. People loveable on earth, even though in sin, are horrible, detestable in hell. Oh! there are fearful sights and sounds, but we overleap all in the one fearful consideration, we may lose God for ever. Enough is said: we cannot add anything more fearful than that we shall have lost God for ever if we enter hell. O God! spare Thy people, for men of all kinds, all tribes, all races, are hurrying on that way to hell. Some even of Thy Priests and Thy spouses

Digitized by Google

are now on their way to Thy fearful place of punishment. Do not, dear God, suffer Thy children to be lost; spare the Church of the Sacred Heart,—for love of Jesus, spare His brethren,—for love of Mary, spare her children.

"Let God arise and scatter His enemies; and let them that hate Him flee from before His face."

FIFTH CONFERENCE.

ON TEMPTATION.

Temptations usually spring from infringement of rule and neglect of grace, though it may be only in seemingly small matters. How little we think of temptation; how little we really strive against a temptation. If we realized more strongly the fact that we are daily and hourly tempted by an enemy of God, who hates Him and us, surely, surely, we should make stronger efforts to resist and overcome the attacks of this hateful being. It is strange how little we do to overcome temptation. How few fight bravely against their pas-

Digitized by Google

sions. How few discover the plots of Satan against their happiness. If we seriously realized that we were tempted, if we saw the snares of the devil, then we might fight. It is from the very fact that we do not seriously think of the temptations we suffer from that we so constantly fall into them, as it is because we do not know ourselves that we so often sin. The devil is far cleverer than we. He watches us well. He sees plainly what would do us good, and what would do us harm. He prevents the one when he can, and procures the other; but before he does anything he first blinds us. How often do we not find we have had a repugnance to what we have afterwards found has done us a deal of good. It might have been a book, or a person, or a place. The book may have been the means of strengthening our soul wonderfully; the person may have almost been the salvation of it; the place may have brought us many many graces. How foolish we are to be so blinded, to walk so straight into the snares of the devil. How he must laugh at our stupidity. He perhaps sees a person who would do us a deal of good. He immedi-

Digitized by Google

ately instils into our minds some suspicion of that person; may be, he shows some imperfection that the person, though a holy person, may have, and exaggerates it; mayhap he endeavours to make us believe the person dislikes us; but however it be, he sows his seed carefully. Would that we sowed the good seed in the hearts of those we can influence as carefully!

Persons are almost unconscious at first of what is going on within them; uncharitable suspicious thoughts arise within them and are not repressed. Sad indeed is this truth, but nevertheless it is a truth. All over the world is there envy, hatred, strife, dissension, disunion, uncharitableness of all kinds, from this terrible evil, *uncharitable thoughts*. We should repress an uncharitable thought as we would a bad thought. Do we do this? Let us search seriously into ourselves and we shall be astonished; if our consciences are tender we shall be horrified to find we have cherished such an evil without the slightest scruple. To sow disunion, to cause uncharitableness, is the devil's principal work. "Love is the fulfiling of the law;" he wishes to destroy the law; he uproots charity where he finds

Digitized by Google

it; he prevents it where it might exist. Everywhere is he busy: in the community, in the domestic home, between husband and wife, brother and sister, servant and mistress. Everywhere it is the same, the one great evil. Everywhere we go there is sorrow and suffering, and almost everywhere it proceeds from the same cause, uncharitableness; and the uncharitableness has everywhere arisen from an unrepressed, uncharitable thought.

The subject of temptation is, of course, a very wide one, but the temptation to uncharitableness seems to me one of the greatest evils in life. It is so little thought of, it is astonishing. We may hear even good people speaking against their neighbour, and if they are reminded that this is not right, excusing themselves by saying: "Well, but it is true." Good God! have these people learnt their catechism? If not, it is time they did; but if they have, how is it they forget the plain words: "That they must *wish* well to all, do good to all, and never allow themselves any *thought*, *word*, or deed, to the prejudice of any one"? Golden words. And what else do we find? That when we have injured our

Digitized by Google

neighbour, by speaking ill of him, "we must make him satisfaction, and restore his good name as far as we are able." This is likewise a truth strangely forgotten, or the trouble it would cause would soon induce people to be more careful of their words.

But our present intention is with the root of the evil—uncharitable, suspicious, or judging thoughts. If we see anything manifestly wrong, of course we are not to excuse the evil, but we must excuse the person in our own minds as far as possible, inasmuch as the person may have been unusually tempted, or in partial ignorance, or have good qualities that we do not see; and it is a very certain fact that most people have some good we do not at all know. "God loves us best, because He knows us best." Wonderful words of Father Faber. Yes, God sees something loveable in all of us that we do not see in one another. Would that we did see it. Would that we did love others with a spark of the love of Jesu's Heart. Supposing a person is indeed steeped in sin and altogether unloveable, seemingly "rotten to the very core," should we not

Digitized by Google

still love the poor victim to the devil's hatred?

We would not like to watch a poor fly in a spider's web, gradually coiled round and round till it is completely hemmed in and unable to release itself. Ah! think of the coils the devil has wound round so many poor souls. They know not how to release themselves; deliverance seems almost as impossible to them as it is to the poor fly in the spider's web. They have need of some helping hand. Shall we turn from those poor sinners in disgust? Shall we think it hopeless to attempt to extricate them from their sad state? Ah! our vocation bids us hope, above others, in the infinite mercy of God. It bids us, Mary-like, motherlike, to seek for the most needy and necessitous, the most abandoned, the most seemingly hopeless cases. Our hearts must be motherlike; they must be like that of the Mother above all mothers. If our hearts are not naturally loving, grace can make them so. If we are given to yield to temptations, to suspicions, rash judgments, uncharitable thoughts of others, we must change. Our hearts can be changed. They must

Digitized by Google

be changed if we would enter heaven, as nothing defiled can enter there. It is all pure gold in heaven, all love. There could not be the least shadow of uncharitableness there. No, we must have hearts of love here if we would live in Love hereafter.

But how can we change our hearts? What shall we do? How can we have what we know would make us happy in time and eternity. We all desire to possess love. We have prayed for it, some will say; and I say to you: Go, and take it. One who would be warm goes to the heat. They go to the fire. They warm themselves with what is warm. They would drink what is warm. So I say to you, if you would love, go to Love Itself. Go, remain with simple faith in the presence of Love Incarnate, in the Blessed Sacrament, and you will love. Feed upon Love in the Holy Eucharist, and you will possess Love. Yes, in Holy Communion we possess the Heart of Jesus, and that Heart of Love will make ours like to Itself if we put no obstacle in the way. We possess in Holy Communion the Author of all Grace, Jesus Himself. We might

Digitized by Google

almost say we need not then to ask for grace, we may take it ourselves from Him. The woman who but touched the hem of His garment was healed. Oh, if we had her faith, what wonders we should obtain from Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament! As when close to a good fire we need not fetch fuel to make a fire wherewith to warm ourselves, so when close to the furnace of Divine Love, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, when It is really beating with love close to our own poor cold hearts, let us then really, with ardent faith, take the fire of Love from that burning Heart, and our own will be changed: they too will burn; we shall be animated by love in all we do; we shall enkindle it in those around.

It is well, in writing upon temptation, to imprint deeply upon our minds this thought, that the easiest way of not giving way to it is, first of all, to beg the grace of knowing when we are in temptation. We are often tempted, and through our not realizing the fact, the devil has an easy victory. The next point is steadily, without referring to the temptation, whether it be anger, pride, or whatever it may be,

Digitized by Google

to turn to Jesus for strength to oppose it. Let us never think to be able to overcome either our small or great temptations by ourselves; and neither let us ever give way to the other terribly dangerous temptation of thinking that, because they are so strong and we so weak, we cannot overcome them. Oh, no! Let us place our strength in Jesus. Let us throw ourselves upon Him. Let us spiritually strengthen ourselves with the Blessed Sacrament. Thus shall we really live by Him. Thus shall we do what He has told us. We shall be to Him what He desires we should be, as the branches of a vine, which necessarily must take all their strength from the vine itself. Yes, our Lord is the Vine; and as in the vine the sap is distributed through all the branches, so Jesus pours from His Sacred Heart the Life-giving Sap of His Precious Blood to all His Own. They are indeed His members, united as closely to, and depending as necessarily upon Him, as the branches upon the vine.

How few there are who really fight with temptation: and how sad it is that so many weakly, selfishly, cowardly, give

Digitized by Google

way to temptation, and desert God at the very beginning of the attack of His enemy. They perhaps would be more earnest about the matter, there is little doubt they would, if they had to fight a visible battle with the devil for God. How they would defend likewise anyone they loved from him. But surely they should love themselves well enough to be their own friend; and if they cannot resist the attacks of the devil for the sake of their own poor soul, let them look at it in another light. Let them consider they are called upon to fight for God. Oh, then surely surely we will be brave. We will make now the resolution which we will call upon our Mother to help us to keep, that the next time temptation assails us we will put aside the thought of ourselves and consider this: "Now is the time to show our love for God." We will look upon the devil's attack upon us as an attack upon God, which indeed it is: as I have quoted before,* the devil cannot hurt God, therefore he attacks His children, namely, ourselves. Let us recollect this fact, that we are

* "Mary's Call to her Children."

Digitized by Google

called upon to fight for God, and surely we will indeed fight. We will resolutely turn our back upon whatever temptation molests us, saying: By God's grace I will not consent; and then, let the devil do what he may, he would be vanquished. If we are resolved to conquer, and trust not to ourselves but to Jesus, then most certainly we shall. "By this sign thou shalt conquer." Though the attack may be painful, by the sign of Jesu's cross we shall conquer.

MEDITATION ON THE BLESSED TRINITY.

You who know not the God who made you, rest a little while from the thoughts of this world; make a short invocation to your patron saint; cast a look of love to your angel guardian; then lay yourself as a little child upon the breast of Mary, whose dear Mother's heart is beating with a love for you that you have no conception of, and with her assistance bring all you know of God before your mind. Holy

Digitized by Google

angels, what do you see as you gaze upon the Divine Essence? Infinity: infinite beauty, infinite love, infinite mercy, infinite power, infinite majesty, goodness, happiness, peace, perfections unspeakable. Do they pertain to One Person? Look from your Mother's breast, and see the divine companionship of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. All the divine perfections of the Father are equally possessed by the Son, Who is eternally Generated by the Father. All the divine perfections of the Father and Son are possessed by the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit of Father and Son eternally Proceeding from Them. O Divine Union! Three adorable Persons, yet so united that They are but one God, the Ever Blessed Trinity. Infinitely happy is God the Father in the possession of His Only Son, the Son of His Love, born of Him from all eternity. Infinitely happy is the Son, the Word of the Father, in His repose from all eternity in the Bosom of the Father. Infinitely happy is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Father, the Spirit of the Son, eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son, the very jubilee of the ever bright

Digitized by Google

and peaceful Trinity. "Glory be to Thee, O most sweet, most noble, resplendent, peaceful, ineffable Trinity," you whisper from your Mother's breast. Would that I might rest with Thee, my God, my God, in everlasting peace. Would that I might see Thee, God of my heart, and my portion for ever. Taste and see how sweet the Lord is. Ah, we taste but very faintly now His unspeakable sweetness, we know but little of His loveliness, but He is Love Itself. Oh, Love not known, Love not loved! Love not known, Love not loved! Love infinite in Itself. Love pouring Itself upon us finite creatures; ever within Itself a vast ocean of peace, joy, bliss unspeakable; ever pouring Itself upon Its creation, flooding those who will receive of Its abundance, giving in this world a foretaste of the peace of heaven.

Why do we not then live in hope and love on earth? Why not so live as to fit us for that home. Why trouble about the little vexations, the crosses of earth, the death of our dear ones, "God never dies." The strong living, loving God is ever the same, ever infinitely loveable, beautiful, desirable. Ever loving us, not as we poor

Digitized by Google

mortals love one another, even in our strongest love, but with His own Divine Love, the Infinite Love of the great God Who made us, because of His Love to be loved, and so desires we should love Him. Let us humbly prostrate in deepest adoration before the Ever Blessed Trinity. Let us, forgetting ourselves, make one grand act of love and worship of God before all things; let us, as we find how unable we are to worship Him as He should be worshipped, beg from our Lady her pure heart of love, to adore God with, to praise Him. Let us think as Mary thought, how even she could not worship God as He should be worshipped, and unite with the Sacred Heart in Its adoration, in Its praise, in Its intense indescribable worship of the Blessed Trinity, which the God-Man, Jesus, our dear Lord and Brother, can alone perfectly worship.

But God, we Thy little creatures love Thee, we rejoice that Thou art so great, so good, so beautiful, so happy. We rejoice in Thee all we can, we will seek Thee all we can: we will, we *do* love Thee with our whole hearts; but we love Thee not as we would love Thee; we know Thee not as

Digitized by Google

we would wish to; but in heaven we shall know even as we are known, we shall love Thee indeed, not as we are loved, but we shall then indeed be all love; we shall be replenished from that Vast Ocean of Love, with love so great, so wonderful, that our earthly love will seem but a figure, a faint faint figure of the Heavenly Love we then enjoy, and which will indeed be our very life. Yes, our life in heaven will be a life of love, we shall live in Love, for Love, by Love, for we shall live and look upon Love, upon the God of Love, the God Whom on earth we looked upon darkly and loved so strangely, as it will then seem to us. We shall there know what a life of labour and of love has brought to us, and shall live one unchanging unending life of love, blissful, peaceful, unutterably happy love. May God grant that the Mother of fair love, of fear, of knowledge, and of holy hope, may infuse into her children her spirit, that they may on earth so live in the Presence of God as to be allowed to see and enjoy the Beatific Vision of His Beauty for ever and ever, with her, their sweet loving Mother in heaven.

Digitized by Google

RICHARDSON AND SONS, PRINTERS, DERBY.

Digitized by Google

PUBLISHED BY RICHARDSON & SONS,
26, Paternoster Row, London; & Derby.

BOOKS FOR SPIRITUAL READING AND DEVOTION.

A Message from the Mother-Heart of Mary. Price 4d.—bound 6d.

"We strongly recommend the 'Message from the Mother-Heart of Mary' for the use of our flock. The pious practices which it inculcates are full of spiritual profit.

"✠ EDWARD, Bishop of Nottingham."

Our Lady's Comfort to the Sorrowful. Price 6d.—Cloth, gilt, 1s.

"We grant to the faithful of our Diocese an Indulgence of forty days each time that they recite either of the collections of prayers in the work entitled 'Our Lady's Comfort to the Sorrowful.'

"✠ EDWARD, Bishop of Nottingham."

The Path of Mary. Price 8d., bound 1s.

"Having read several times with much pleasure and satisfaction the little work entitled 'The Path of Mary,' we heartily recommend it to the Faithful of our Diocese. It appears to us to be a faithful and devout exposition of the 'True Devotion to the Holy Virgin' of the Venerable Grignon de Montfort, a devotion which has received the sanction of the Church, and which is full of spriritual graces.

"✠ EDWARD, Bishop of Nottingham.
"June 24, 1878."

Spir. Ex.

Digitized by Google

Books for Spiritual Reading and Devotion.

Spiritual Exercises of Mary, royal 32mo, superfine cloth, lettered, price 2s.

Indulgenced Prayers to be said at Mass, in honour of the Precious Blood. Price 4d. per dozen.

Indulgenced Prayers for the Holy Souls and for the Dying. From "Our Lady's Comfort to the Sorrowful." Price 6d. per dozen.

Act of Consecration, and Morning Offering, for those who enter on the Path of Mary. From the "Spiritual Exercises of Mary." Price 1d.; 9d. per dozen.

To be had from the Convent of the Maternal Heart of Mary, Hyson Green, Nottingham;
Or from Messrs. Richardson and Sons, 26, Paternoster Row, London; and Derby.

NOW READY, HANDSOME CLOTH COVER, PRICE ONE SHILLING.

The Miracle at Lourdes, on September 16th, 1877. By Henri Lasserre. Translated by Mrs. Stuart Laidlaw.

The History of the Miraculous Sanctuary of OUR LADY of LOURDES. Translated by the Rev. Father Ignatius Sisk, O.C., from the French of Henry Lasserre, price 5s.

Digitized by Google

Catholic Penny Prayer Book, designed for the Use of Schools. **New Edition, Revised and Enlarged.** With the Approbation of the Bishop of Nottingham. Compiled from Messrs. Richardson and Sons' New Edition of the "Garden of the Soul."

S. Mary's Catholic Hymn Book, containing 55 Popular Hymns, and Benediction of the B. Sacrament. With the Approbation of the Bishop of Nottingham. Price One Penny.

Penny Prayer Book and S. Mary's Hymn Book, together, paper cover, 2d., cloth, 3d.; with **Catechism of Christian Doctrine** added, paper cover, 3d., cloth, 4d.—**Penny Prayer Book with Catechism; or S. Mary's Hymn Book with Catechism:** paper cover, 2d., cloth, 3d.

NOW READY, PRICE SIXPENCE.

A NEW EDITION OF

The Garden of the Soul, with the addition of Popular Hymns, approved Devotions, the Asperges, &c. Printed from good bold type. The best Sixpenny edition hitherto published.

SAME BOOK, with Epistles and Gospels, and Ordinary of the Mass, price 1s.

NOW READY, PRICE ONE SHILLING.

Parochial Garden of the Soul. New Large Type 18mo Edition. The cheapest and most complete edition of the Garden of the Soul, and the one best adapted for general use.

SAME BOOK, with Epistles and Gospels, 1s. 6d.

Digitized by Google

RICHARDSON AND SONS' PUBLICATIONS.

NEW SHILLING SERIES OF

Catholic Tales,

SUITABLE FOR PRESENTS OR FOR SCHOOL PRIZES.

Foolscap 8vo., handsomely bound in cloth, with black printing on side, and lettered in gold.

Hilda's Victory; and Una's Repentance. Tales by M. F. S.

Little Musicians who became Great Masters. FIRST SERIES. Translated by Mrs. Townsend.

Little Musicians who became Great Masters. SECOND SERIES. Together with the **Flowers of Childhood.** Translated by Mrs. Townsend.

Ellerton Priory. A tale. By the Author of Claire Maitland.

Little Flower Basket. By Canon Schmid.

Godfrey, the Little Hermit. By Canon Schmid.

The Search for Happiness, and other Tales for Young People.

Marie, the Fisherman's Daughter.

Forest Pony, Gipsy Boy, and other Tales, by Lady Elizabeth Douglas.

Elsie Mc'Dermott, the Little Watercress Girl.

The Gift, containing three interesting Catholic Tales, by Mrs. James W. Kavanagh.

To be followed by others.

Digitized by Google

RICHARDSON AND SONS' PUBLICATIONS.

Demy 18mo, handsomely bound in Cloth,
Price 6d. each.

CATHOLIC
Tales for the Young,

SUITABLE FOR PRESENTS OR FOR SCHOOL PRIZES.

Morning and Evening Star.
Christmas Dinner.
Hawthorn Bush.
Pearl Lost and Found.
The Holy House.
A Tale of the Crusaders.
Maurice's Trial.
Carry's Trials.
The Life of Freddy Wragg, (Br. M. Aloysius,) a Dominican Tertiary. By the Rev. H. Collins.
Willie and his Sisters; or the Joyful Return from School.
Memoir of the Life of Augustine Mc'Nally, Brother Joseph, O.S.D., by the Rev. H. Collins.

Will be followed by others.

Digitized by Google

WORKS BY THE REV. H. COLLINS.

The Life of Dame Gertrude More, Order of S. Benedict, Lineal descendant of Sir Thomas More, the Martyr, from Ancient MSS. With the Imprimatur of the Bishop of Nottingham. By the Rev. H. Collins, superfine cloth, price 2s.

Devotions of Dame Gertrude More, O.S.B. Re-arranged by the Rev. H. Collins, cloth, red edges, 1s.

The Divine Cloud, with Notes and a Preface, by Father Augustin Baker, O.S.B., the whole edited by the Rev. Henry Collins. Printed on toned paper, small 8vo. price 4s.

Spiritual Letters of Father Surin, S.J., First Series. Translated by Sister M. Christopher, Order of S. Francis. With a Preface by Father Francis Goldie, S.J. Edited by the Rev. H. Collins, price 4s. 6d.

The Cistercian Fathers, or Lives and Legends of certain Saints and Blessed of the Order of Citeaux, translated by the Rev. Henry Collins. With a Preface by the Rev. W. R. Brownlow, M.A., one of the Editors of "Roma Sotterranea." FIRST SERIES, price 4s.

The Cistercian Fathers. SECOND SERIES, price 4s. 6d.

The Quiet of the Soul. By Father John de Bevilla. To which is added, Cure for Scruples, By Dom: Schram, O. S. B. Edited by the Rev. H. Collins, price 6d.

Digitized by Google

Mediæval Library of Mystical and Ascetical Works.

Revelations of Divine Love, shewn to a Devout Anchoress, by name, Mother Juliana of Norwich. With a Preface by Henry Collins. Superfine cloth, price 4s.

Select Revelations of S. Mechtild, Virgin, taken from the Five Books of her Spiritual Grace, and Translated from the Latin by a Secular Priest. Superfine Cloth, price 3s. 6d.

Meditations on the Life and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. By Dr. John Tauler, Dominican Friar. Translated from the Latin by a Secular Priest. Superfine Cloth, Price 6s.

The Book of the Visions and Instructions of B. Angela of Foligno, as taken down from her own lips by Brother Arnold of the Friars Minor. Now first translated into English by a Secular Priest of the Third Order of St. Dominic, Author of a translation of the Life of Ven. Grignon de Montfort. price 4s.

The Fiery Soliloquy with God, of the Rev. Master Gerlac Petersen, throwing light upon the Solid Ways of the whole Spiritual Life. Translated from the Latin by a Secular Priest, price 3s.

Father Eudes, Apostolic Missionary, and his Foundations. 1601-1874. By. M. Ch. de Montzey. With a Brief of Approval addressed to the Author by His Holiness Pope Pius IX. Post 8vo, superfine cloth, price 4s. 6d.

Digitized by Google

Heaven to All who Love. By the Abbe Nambride de Nigri. Translated from the French by Madame R. A. Vain, post 8vo., price 4s.

Meditations on the Way of the Cross. By L'Abbe H. Perreyve. Edited in English by a Priest of the Diocese of Birmingham. Superfine Cloth, price 2s.

Spiritual Works of Saint Francis Borgia. Cloth, price 1s.

Spiritual Consolation, or a Treatise on the Peace of the Soul, from the French of Pere Lomber, interspersed with various Instructions necessary for promoting the Practice of Solid Piety, by the Authoress of "The Ursuline Manual." Small 8vo, Superfine Cloth, price 4s.

The Mistress of Novices Instructed in her Duties: or, a Method of Direction for the use of Persons charged with the Training of Souls in Christian and Religious Perfection. Translated from the Second Edition by the Rev. F. Ignatius Sisk, of Mount St. Bernard's Abbey, price 4s.

Visits to the Most Holy Sacrament, for every Day in the Month; also Preparation for and Thanksgiving after Communion. By St. Alphonsus Liguori. With an Appendix containing Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Price 6d.

Month of Mary for Interior Souls. Translated from the French, with the sanction of His Eminence Cardinal Wiseman, by M. A. Macdaniel. Paper wrapper, 2s.—Fine cloth, price 2s. 6d.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google